



THE INDEPENDENT

No 3,877

TUESDAY 23 MARCH 1999

(150p) 45p

TOSH!

WHY SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE IS A TRAGEDY

ED JACOBSON, REVIEW FRONT

WRONG!

WHY TONY BLAIR NEEDS TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

DEBORAH ORR, REVIEW, PAGE 5

OUCH!

WHY CONRAN AND GLENDINNING ARE FIGHTING DIRTY

DAVID LISTER, REVIEW, PAGE 8

Shakespeare in Tears: 'I thank our miraculous cast [sobs] and crew [sobs] and my family [more sobs] who I love more than anything'



'Thank you so much everybody...' An emotional Gwyneth Paltrow accepts the Oscar for Best Actress for her part as Viola in the film 'Shakespeare in Love'. Report, page 7

Gary Hershorn/Eric Draper

MONDAY TELEVISION

BBC1

BBC2

ITV Carlton

Channel 4

Straw halts release of IRA men

JACK STRAW intervened last night to halt the early release of four IRA prisoners including the Brighton bomber, Patrick Magee.

A hearing will decide today whether the four should serve longer terms in prison, after the Home Secretary obtained a ministerial order setting aside the decision by the Northern Ireland Sentence Review Commission to allow the prisoners' immediate release under the Good Friday Agreement.

The unprecedented move is the first attempt by the Government to slow down the early release of IRA prisoners, and risks provoking an angry reaction from the republican movement at a time when the peace process hangs in the balance.

Downing Street denied the move was in response to the public outcry over the disclosure

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent
AND DAVID MCFERRAN
Ireland Correspondent

sure that members of an IRA sniper team, jailed last week for a total of 600 years, could be released within 16 months.

The commission yesterday approved the immediate release of three prisoners - Paul Kavanagh, Thomas Quigley, and Gerard McDowell, who were jailed for life for bombing campaigns on the mainland but transferred to serve their sentences in Northern Ireland.

The commission's decision would have brought forward the release date of Magee.

Judges recommended that two of them, Magee and Thomas Quigley, should each serve not less than 35 years in prison. In 1986 Magee, then

aged 35, was given eight life sentences for his part in the Brighton hotel bombing of the Thatcher cabinet.

He was found guilty of placing the time-delay device which exploded the Grand Hotel during the 1984 Conservative conference, killing five people.

In Belfast, the Ulster

Unionist leader and First Minister, David Trimble, has called for the release to be suspended until the IRA begins decommissioning its weapons, an approach rejected by Tony Blair.

William Hague, the Tory leader, has called for the releases to be suspended until the IRA begins decommissioning its weapons, an approach rejected by Tony Blair.

Mr Straw sought the judicial review on the grounds that the commission had been wrong to assess the men's sentences as if they had been jailed in the Province. A different tariff operates for prisoners sentenced on mainland Britain under the Northern Ireland Sentences

The judge told him: 'You intended to wipe out a large part of the Government and very nearly did. I am satisfied that you enjoy terrorism.'

Magee is regarded as an IRA folk hero for coming close to killing Margaret Thatcher, who was then at the top of the IRA's assassination list. Kavanagh and Quigley were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1985 on three counts of murder and possession of explosives.

McDowell, then 35, was sentenced to life imprisonment after being tried with Magee. He was convicted of conspiring to cause a series of explosions at seaside resorts.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said the Home Secretary had intervened as part of the 'due process' of the law,

and it had nothing to do with public anger over the early release of IRA prisoners.

But the policy has been one of the most controversial aspects of the peace process, and victims' families pointed out that IRA men were being released before any weapons were surrendered under the Good Friday Agreement.

William Hague, the Tory leader, has called for the releases to be suspended until the IRA begins decommissioning its weapons, an approach rejected by Tony Blair.

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Act 1998. A Home Office spokesman said: 'The Government is committed to meeting our obligations under the Good Friday Agreement. The Government thinks that it is important to clarify the application of the law as it applies to prisoners transferred from England and Wales to Northern Ireland.'

The Government said that if circumstances permitted, all the qualifying prisoners would be released under the terms of the Agreement by July 2000.

That now depends on the peace process holding together, and intensive efforts are being made to prevent it collapsing before the Easter deadline.

Mr Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, are expected to discuss a joint initiative to secure the peace process when they meet

tight at the European summit in Berlin. The two leaders are planning jointly to meet the party leaders in Northern Ireland to force through a final agreement, which will enable Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, to join the executive of the power-sharing Assembly in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein last night reacted angrily to the development, accusing Mr Straw of interfering with the Agreement and of having double standards.

Gerry Kelly, party spokesman, said: 'His behaviour is unacceptable. Sinn Fein believes that the decision of the review board to release the four men is the right one. Mr Straw should withdraw any procedures to change that decision.'

Rough justice, page 3

How to become a freelance writer

by NICK DAWES

Freelance writing can be creative, fulfilling and a lot of fun, with excellent money to be made as well. What's more, anyone can become a writer. No special qualifications or experience are required.

The market for writers is huge. In Britain alone there are around 1,000 daily, Sunday and weekly papers, and more than 8,000 magazines. Many of the stories and articles that they publish are supplied by freelancers. Theo there are books, theatre, films, TV, radio...

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Nato gets mandate to hit Serb targets

PRESIDENT SLOBODAN Milošević was given a final warning yesterday that the West is 'on the brink of military action' over Kosovo. The warning came as Nato received a mandate to hit military targets all over Yugoslavia.

As the message was delivered to Mr Milošević by the United States envoy, Richard Holbrooke, the Serbs showed their contempt for the West's peace proposal by torching Kosovo villages, murdering civilians and driving thousands more from their homes.

European leaders and Nato's most senior general insisted that only a change of heart from Belgrade could now avert air strikes. General Wesley Clark, Nato's supreme commander, threatened to 'strike in a swift and severe fashion' if Mr Holbrooke returns from Belgrade empty-handed.

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
In Brussels
AND EMMA DALY
in Serbia

Tony Blair also said that he and the French President, Jacques Chirac, had agreed Nato would have no choice but to bomb Serb targets unless Belgrade backed down. 'They agreed the situation is now grave,' a spokesman said. 'If Milošević does not stop his offensive immediately and sign to the Rambouillet [peace] accord, Nato has no option but to act.'

In Washington, President Bill Clinton was more cautious, insisting the US still sought 'a peaceful solution'. The US President would only say: 'If Milošević continues to choose aggression over peace, Nato must move forward.'

A meeting of Nato ambas-

sadors in Brussels gave the Secretary-General, Javier Solana, the right to authorise attacks not only on Serb air bases but to strike at targets throughout the country.

Nato has about 400 aircraft ready to launch strikes, as well as US submarines and surface ships capable of firing cruise missiles.

In Belgrade, state television said Mr Milošević had sent a fierce letter to the French and British foreign ministers saying Serbia would not accept an imposed solution. He said Robin Cook and Hubert Vedrine should be ashamed of themselves for threatening a small European nation with bombing.

The situation in Kosovo is deteriorating fast. Nato sources believe about 22 per cent of the 2 million population have been driven from their homes.

Ferocious assault, page 11

US prepares £560m trade war on Europe

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

THE UNITED STATES raised the stakes in the transatlantic trade war last night, warning that if Europe does not start importing hormone-treated American beef it will impose punitive tariffs on \$500m (£360m) of Eu-

ropean goods. To begin before the completion of full scientific studies on the hormone's possible harmful effects, the EU has offered to pay compensation to the US for loss of export earnings, but the Americans are demanding compliance by 13 May with a World Trade Organisation edict that the ban breaches trade rules. A third source of dispute is on aircraft: the EU has brought in a requirement that older aircraft flying here should be equipped with noise-reducing 'hush kits'. But the US has threatened to ban Concordes operated by British Airways and Air France.

Nick Brown, the Minister of Agriculture, said the US 'would be within its rights' to impose the tariffs. He said: 'The UK has always opposed the EU ban on grounds that it is not justified by the science.' EU foreign ministers have said imports will not be allowed to begin before the completion of full scientific studies on the hormone's possible harmful effects. The EU has offered to pay compensation to the US for loss of export earnings, but the Americans are demanding compliance by 13 May with a World Trade Organisation edict that the ban breaches trade rules. A third source of dispute is on aircraft: the EU has brought in a requirement that older aircraft flying here should be equipped with noise-reducing 'hush kits'. But the US has threatened to ban Concordes operated by British Airways and Air France.

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TODAY'S TELEVISION
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TOMORROW WITH THE INDEPENDENT



BUSINESS REVIEW

MAKE A SOUND INVESTMENT. EVERY WEDNESDAY

WITH HAMISH MCRAE, DIANE COYLE, DEREK PAIN, JO DAVIS AND THE TRADER

Drivers threaten to extend blockade

HUNDREDS OF lorry drivers are planning to extend a demonstration that brought traffic chaos to London yesterday after they were snubbed by the Government, which "refused to be held to ransom".

Hauliers threatened to blockade Channel ports and bring other cities to a standstill after they were prevented from holding talks with the Prime Minister or the Chancellor.

About 1,000 lorries blocked Park Lane in central London in protest at rises in diesel duty and road tax announced in the Budget. A delegation from Trans-action, the group behind the protest, was allowed to go to the front door of 10 Downing Street but was told no one would meet it.

Frank Stears, a Kent-based haulier who led the delegation, said: "We are fighting for our livelihoods. We are fighting for the price of diesel and road tax to come in line with Europe. We have asked if somebody will speak to us... so we don't have to hold any more demos."

He said 51,000 road haulage jobs were on the line, as many as were under threat at Longbridge, the Rover car factory. "We are trying to keep British small firms and British drivers and their families in jobs

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

and prevent putting them on the dole."

Hundreds of lorries blocked the road for five hours. Drivers and their families mingled on the pavement and picnicked in nearby Hyde Park.

Ron Wood, of RW Haulage Services of Sheerness, Kent, said he would go out of business unless the Government backed down. "If they do not listen to us we will do it properly next time - and shut all the docks, all the motorways and all the cities. If they want us to be like the French truckers, we will."

Joe Cook, of JS Cook of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, said there would be a blockade of the Channel ports, while Peter Starkins from Basildon, Essex, said: "We will shut London down for two weeks if necessary."

The Government said it would not be held to ransom by a "relatively small number of people". John Reid, a Transport minister, said: "I have offered the path of dialogue to the hauliers but apparently they prefer the path of disruption."



Lorry drivers heading along Park Lane to Downing Street yesterday John Voos

Benefits to be held back in fraud blitz

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

THE GOVERNMENT is to save £1bn by delaying social security payments to new claimants in its latest attempt to root out fraud.

In a strategy document to be published today, ministers will announce that Benefits Agency staff will carry out much more rigorous checks into the background of claimants before allowing them to receive state handouts.

The controversial move could mean lengthy delays in providing help to vulnerable people with genuine claims, welfare rights groups will warn. At present, new claims take about nine days to process, but the period could now be much longer.

Alistair Darling, Secretary of

small-time fiddlers are set off with o warning, but Mr Darling wants to send a message that "crime does not pay".

In a further move, the Post Office will no longer allow Giro cheques to be sent to "PO Box" addresses or redirected to a different address to that of the claimant. This is aimed at preventing fraudsters making multiple claims.

Mr Darling will argue that Labour inherited "a mess" from the Tories, who allowed millions of inaccurate payments despite their repeated pledges to crack down on fraud.

Estimates of false payments range from £1bn to £2bn, and the Secretary of State will set a new target for reducing the loss to the Exchequer. But he will admit that his measures will take some years to deliver.

Other proposals today include greater use of "data matching" between government departments, so that information held on individuals can be cross-checked. This is bound to raise concerns among civil liberties groups, as it abolishes the rule that information collected by the state for one purpose will not be used for another.

However, Mr Darling is confident of winning support for his new approach. "He does not believe it is right to allow people to rip off the system and the tax-payers," said one insider.

Sawoniuk: 'I'm not a monster'

BY PAT CLARKE

Mr Sawoniuk added that if they did not they would probably be imprisoned for "a few years" on their return.

John Nutting QC, for the prosecution, pointed out that one witness, Ben Zion Blustein, a Jew and boyfriend of Mr Sawoniuk, now lived in Israel where there was no KGB.

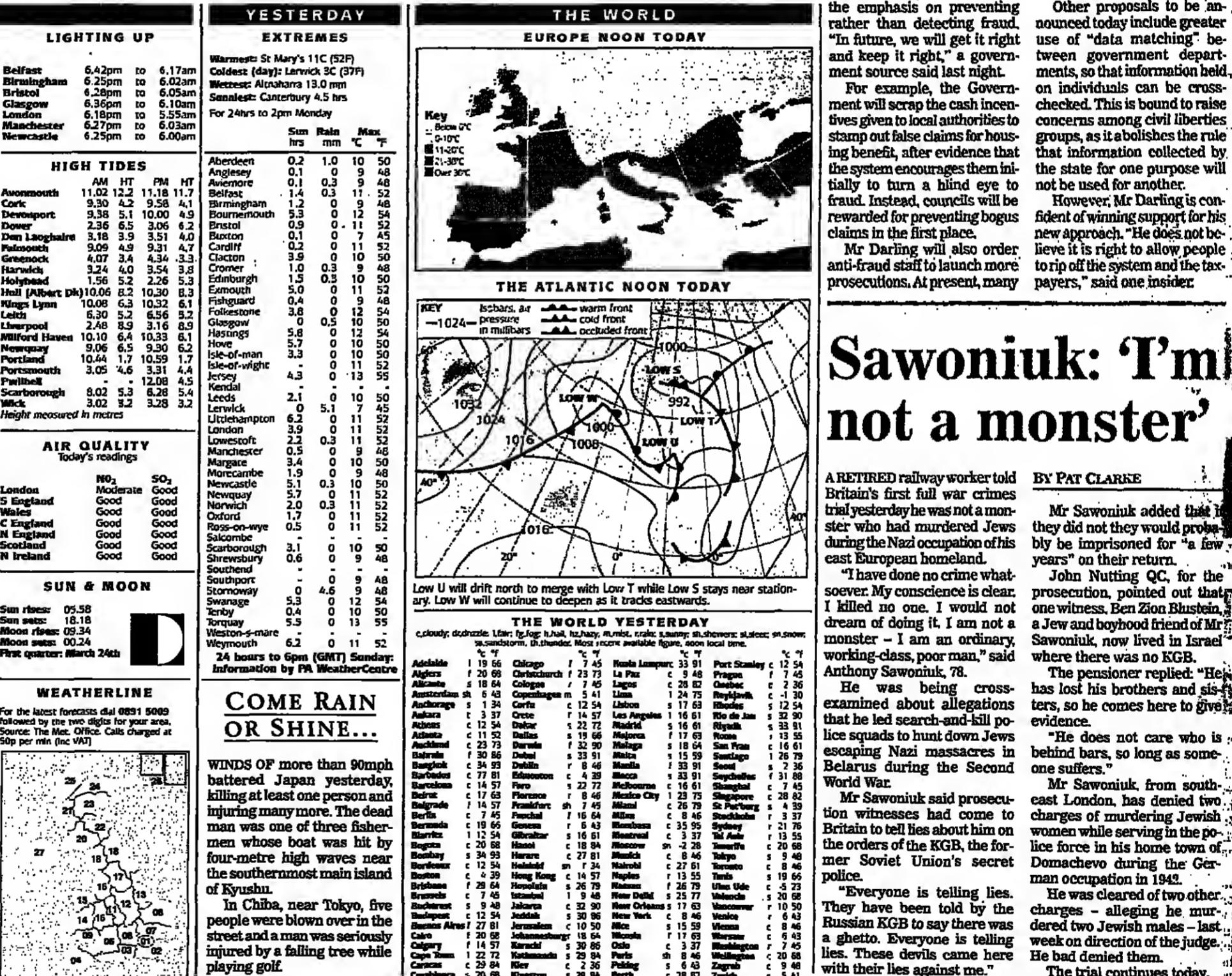
The pensioner replied: "He has lost his brothers and sisters, so he comes here to give evidence."

"He does not care who is behind bars, so long as some of us suffer."

Mr Sawoniuk, from south-east London, had denied two charges of murdering Jewish women while serving in the police force in his home town of Domachevo during the German occupation in 1942.

"Everyone is telling lies. They have been told by the Russian KGB to say there was a ghetto. Everyone is telling lies. These devils came here with their lies against me."

The trial continues today.



Balloonist gives thanks to 'invisible hand'

RECORD-BREAKING balloonist Brian Jones yesterday attributed the success of his round-the-world journey to an invisible hand which guided the balloon in its worst moments.

The 51-year-old from Erlestoke, Wiltshire, also praised his co-pilot, Bertrand Piccard, and the Breitling support team which helped them win the last great prize in aviation.

He told a press conference in Geneva, where the two men had earlier received a heroes' welcome: "It was almost as if there was this invisible hand that was guiding us."

He said that halfway across the Atlantic, as he was furiously calculating if they had enough fuel left to complete the journey, the balloon's speed mysteriously started to climb.

Choking back tears, Mr Jones said: "At that point I just pushed the calculations away and knew we didn't need them anymore, because there was something bigger than that."

The first circumnavigation of the globe in a balloon ended in Egypt on Sunday after 19 days, 21 hours and 55 minutes.



Record-breaking balloonists Brian Jones (left) and Bertrand Piccard receiving a heroes' welcome in Geneva

Peter Dejong/AP

ADVERTISING

TONY BLAIR

I feel so disillusioned with the Labour Party that the only reason I renewed my membership this year was so I could vote for you as mayor. I had already decided to write your name in if the leadership refused to put you on the list. I'm sure many others feel the same. I will be very happy to do what I can to help your campaign if you decide to go it alone.

Most people I know, irrespective of their politics, feel that you are the only person with the relevant experience and more particularly 'oomph' to tackle what looks like a huge mass of lost causes.

LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE - NOT COMMITTEES!

...how can they claim they are DEMOCRATIC when they are SCARED to let you stand, and even more scared of the PEOPLE voting you in. Surely you should be offered a wildcard entry at least! If you are not allowed to stand I for one will never vote LABOUR again! Unfortunately I am on Income Support but would like to send a £5 to you.

I am old enough to remember you as leader of the then GLC, and in the light of that would be delighted to have you as Mayor of London. Your experience, integrity and refreshing frankness, not to mention your personal charm, would I believe make you without doubt the best person to take charge of our capital city.

Though I belong to no political party, I would be willing to campaign on your behalf should you be permitted to stand, and I hope a sense of justice and common sense will prevail among the power managers of the 'New Labour' party.

In my opinion you should be the best choice from the Labour Party, as you have vast experience and in-depth knowledge of London and its needs and problems, which you so efficiently tackled when you were boss of GLC. Your integrity and loyalty to the cause of selfless service could not be challenged; so carry on fighting for right and we are fully behind you.

My husband and I are both Labour Party members and believe that the apparent attempt to block your nomination as candidate is completely undemocratic. We believe that it is London Labour Party members who should choose the party's candidate.

Dear Mr Livingstone, Please find enclosed a contribution of £30 toward your Right To Stand Campaign fund. I am a long-standing member of the Labour Party. As you are a member of the Labour Party, with widespread support in London, the right for your name to be on the ballot paper, for Labour's nomination of a candidate for Mayor is unequivocal. Millbank's intransigence is undemocratic and consequently highly damaging to the Labour Party.

Here's £10 to help for the ad in the Evening Standard. Just what we wanted! Several times you made me very cross about things the GLC did when you were its leader. But on most issues, you had the right ideas and made a lot of us (especially those who hated what Thatcher was doing) proud to be Londoners. Thank you.

We are a collective of 12 dance labels based in Camden. We are great fans of yours (some of us remember with great fondness the GLC days) and believe you alone have the vision to provide a fair deal for ALL Londoners.

DEAR MR LIVINGSTONE, I WROTE YOU A LETTER LAST DECEMBER AND IT SHOWED YOU ARE IN FAVOUR OF THE PENSIONERS GETTING A FAIR DEAL ON PENSIONS. BECAUSE OF THIS AND THE FACT THAT WHEN YOU RAN THE GLC LONDON WAS A BETTER PLACE I WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU TO BECOME LORD MAYOR. (I HAVE QUITE A FOLLOWING IN THE DARBY & JOAN CLUBS IF YOU LET ME KNOW HOW I CAN HELP I WOULD BE OBLIGED).

I feel very strongly that Ken should not be blocked for applying to be mayor of London. He is an honest man and helped Londoners when he controlled County Hall. I think as Londoners should not forget this. I am a member of the Labour Party and will do all I can to further Ken's aim. I enclose my cheque for £20 and wish I could afford to send more.

Dear Ken, Best wishes for becoming Mayor of London. You've got my vote + I thank most Londoners trust you. Good Luck. PS I always vote Labour.

At our meeting of the 1st February, grave concern was expressed at what is seen as a concerted attempt by the Labour party leadership to deny the London membership the democratic right to decide whether or not it wishes Ken Livingstone to stand as Labour's candidate in the forthcoming Mayoral election.

This overwhelming perception held by our members, is, we believe, shared by Londoners of widely differing political persuasions, to the detriment of Labour's reputation and future electoral prospects.

If you are not allowed to stand as a candidate I shall most certainly give 'New' Labour a miss not necessarily because I disapprove of their present policies, but I disapprove of their principles (or perhaps lack of them!) and their drive to centralise political control whilst paying lip service to devolution and more representative government.

We Croydon Labour Party Retired Members and Friends, believe that all London Members of the Labour Party should be involved in selecting Labour's Candidate for London's Mayor.

We support the right of Ken Livingstone to stand for election as Mayor of London, so that the electorate can exercise their democratic rights.

KEN LIVINGSTONE'S RIGHT TO STAND

Ken Livingstone wrote a letter to Tony Blair in January this year saying "If Londoners voted for me to be their elected mayor, I would work for the government, not against it". Why, as so many of the thousands of people who've written to Ken are asking, is he being denied the opportunity of carrying out Labour policy in London? Many of them are Labour Party members, many are not, but they all share misgivings about the proposed NEC vetting panel which may deprive the members of the right to decide who is Labour's candidate. The extracts we reproduce here represent the genuine voice of people genuinely concerned about London. Is anybody listening?

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'Sin bin' units for unruly students

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

to benefit will be in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield.

All secondary schools in the designated areas will also have access to a "learning unit" for disruptive pupils – one for every three schools. Some schools already have pupil referral units or "sin-bins".

Mr Blunkett said in the Commons: "We cannot allow a disruptive pupil to wreck the life chances of others. Excluded youngsters miss out on education and often turn to crime."

Extra lessons for the brightest 10 per cent of pupils will take place in new specialist schools in arts, technology, sport and languages set up under the Conservatives' campaign to impose one form of selection by ability for master classes while threatening the existence of grammar schools.

The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, defended themselves against charges of elitism and attacked the "dismal and gloom merchants" who argued that inner-city children could not be expected to achieve.

Mr Blunkett told pupils and teachers at St Paul's community school in Bow, east London: "We shall be attacked from the right by people who want to return to a selective system that condemned 80 per cent of our children to failure at age 11 and from the left by people who say all children should be treated in the same way – and if they are born into poverty there's nothing you can do about it."

Eight hundred mentors, either teachers or youth workers, will be appointed in 450 target schools at a cost of £17m. They will guide pupils towards extra help and tuition when they are falling behind. The first schools

Deborah Orr, Review, page 5

BBC schedule signals end of ratings war

BY RHEVS WILLIAMS

THE BBC signalled the end of its interest in challenging ITV's ratings yesterday when it launched a spring and summer schedule that features science programmes in peak time and virtually banishes the "docusero".

Instead of countering populism with populism, the corporation's director of television, Alan Yentob, played up the BBC's public service obligations, saying that range and diversity would not be sacrificed in favour of audience share.

Speaking about ITV's phenomenally successful *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, he said: "It's a good game, but it's not our game."

He added: "The BBC has other objectives. We want to bring good drama to peak time and ensure that factual programming and news is strong. To be popular is good but it's not good enough. The BBC needs to thicken the plot, to cross the threshold of people's lives and engage with them on new levels and in new ways."

Peak-time factual output will include *Tobacco Wars*, in which the presenter Michael Buerk, an ex-smoker, embarks on a "personal journey through a century of smoking". Professor Robert Winston, who presented last year's acclaimed *The Human Body*, will feature in two science programmes, one on twins, the other on life for a newborn in the new millennium. David Attenborough narrates a wildlife special on the tiger and BBC2 screens *The Planets*.



Michael Buerk: Looking at a century of smoking

There will also be a live broadcast of the solar eclipse.

The doc-soap, television's most prolific factual genre in recent years, will play a much smaller role. *Maternity* follows the process of childbirth from the first hospital appointment to delivery room. *The Wedding* is about one couple's nuptials.

Although the season will see the return of some familiar drama series (*Final Witness*, *Roger Roger* and *The Ambassador*), there are also several new projects. In *Hope and Glory*, Lenny Henry takes a straight role as a headteacher of a "named and shamed" comprehensive. The award-winning maker of *Holding On*, Adrian Shergold, directs *Eureka Street*, a contemporary drama set in Belfast.

The expected highlight of the season is Tony Marchant's adaptation of Dickens' *Great Expectations* for BBC2.

FERGAL KEANE

To describe a war as 'brutal' and not show it, is pointless

IN THE TUESDAY REVIEW PAGE 12

John Vass

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By JONATHAN JONES
Education Editor

to benefit will be in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield.

All secondary schools in the designated areas will also have access to a "learning unit" for disruptive pupils - one for every three schools. Some schools already have pupil referral units or "bubs".

Mr Turner said in the Commons: "We cannot allow a disruptive pupil to wreck the chances of others. Excessive youngsters must cut out on education and often turn to crime."

Extra lessons for the brightest 10 per cent of pupils will take place in new specialist schools in arts, technology, sport and languages set up under the Conservatives and backed by the Government. The number of beacon schools, which receive extra money to spread good practice, will also increase.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "A stream of initiatives on virtually a weekly basis might be good politics, or even good public relations", but it still fell short of a desperately needed coherent strategy for the inner cities.

David Willetts, the schools Secretary of State for Education, also said why selective ability was being imposed in master classes when the Government was threatening grammar schools and other forms of selection.

Are ministers seriously suggesting more able pupils should be forced to go to school? It's a Monday night in Hackney and it's Ray Day all over the place.

Deborah Review, pg

schedules endings war



Michael Burkh: looking at a century of smoking

Dame Shirley sat primly as court heard of her 'ruin'

By KATHY MARKS



David Weeks, Porter's deputy at Westminster

IF A MARTIAN who had never heard of Dame Shirley Porter had wandered into the Royal Courts of Justice in London yesterday, he could have been forgiven for concluding that she was the victim of an appalling miscarriage of justice.

He would have heard a chilling account of how Dame Shirley, the upstanding former Conservative leader of Westminster City Council, was destroyed by a deadly combination of her political opponents, a hostile media and a district auditor named John Magill.

It was Mr Magill who found her guilty of "improper and disgraceful gerrymandering" in relation to the "homes for votes" scandal in Westminster and ordered her to pay a surcharge of £27m. Yesterday she asked the Appeal Court to quash his findings, arguing that he had displayed "apparent bias" against her and had reached his verdict after an "unreasonable delay".

The appeal is the latest round in a long saga that dates back to the Eighties, when Margaret Thatcher was firmly ensconced in Downing Street and Dame Shirley, heiress to the Tesco millions, was leader of the flagging Tory council.

In 1987, Dame Shirley and David Weeks, her deputy, hatched a plan to sell off council houses in marginal Westminster wards, hoping that Conservative voters would snap them up. Mr Magill, appointed to investigate the affair in 1989, produced a scathing report in 1996 in which he accused them of "wilful misconduct".

Yesterday Dame Shirley, who appealed without success

her time between Tel Aviv and Palm Springs. The years have not been kind to her; her features are pinched and sag in strange places; her hair is a fiercely sculpted suburn helmet that remains immobile however much she tosses her head.

Her tormentor Mr Magill, was in court yesterday but the two exchanged not so much as a glance. His lawyers will have their turn later this week. Dame

Shirley's long-suffering husband, Sir Leslie Porter, turned up to support her; with their two children, Linda and John.

Lord Lester revealed that Mr Magill's "gigantic" investigation had cost more than £2m. Dame Shirley raised her mascara-laden eyes heavenwards, a gesture of Thatcherite disapproval at so much money wasted on something so trivial.

Lord Lester argued that she

had not received a fair hearing at the High Court, where, he said, the principle of presumption of innocence had been breached.

He condemned the "grossly unfair" way in which Mr Magill announced his provisional findings at a televised press conference in January 1994, reading out a floridly worded statement that conveyed "an aura of guilty wrongdoing" and

cast her as "an unscrupulous political ringleader".

He also sent what he called "a note" to her political opponents; the note ran to 235 pages and was accompanied by 13 appendices, including a 350-page history, plus 14 lever-arch files containing more than 10,000 pages of documents. This led, as became clear from reports in newspapers the following day, to a "well-organised, de-

liberate and targeted leaking".

The appeal is expected to last a week and judgment will be reserved. If Dame Shirley loses again, she intends to take her case to the House of Lords.

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Dame Shirley Porter battles her way into the Royal Courts of Justice in London yesterday in an effort to clear her name. Andrew Buurman

had remained uncertain as to the outcome and the sanction.

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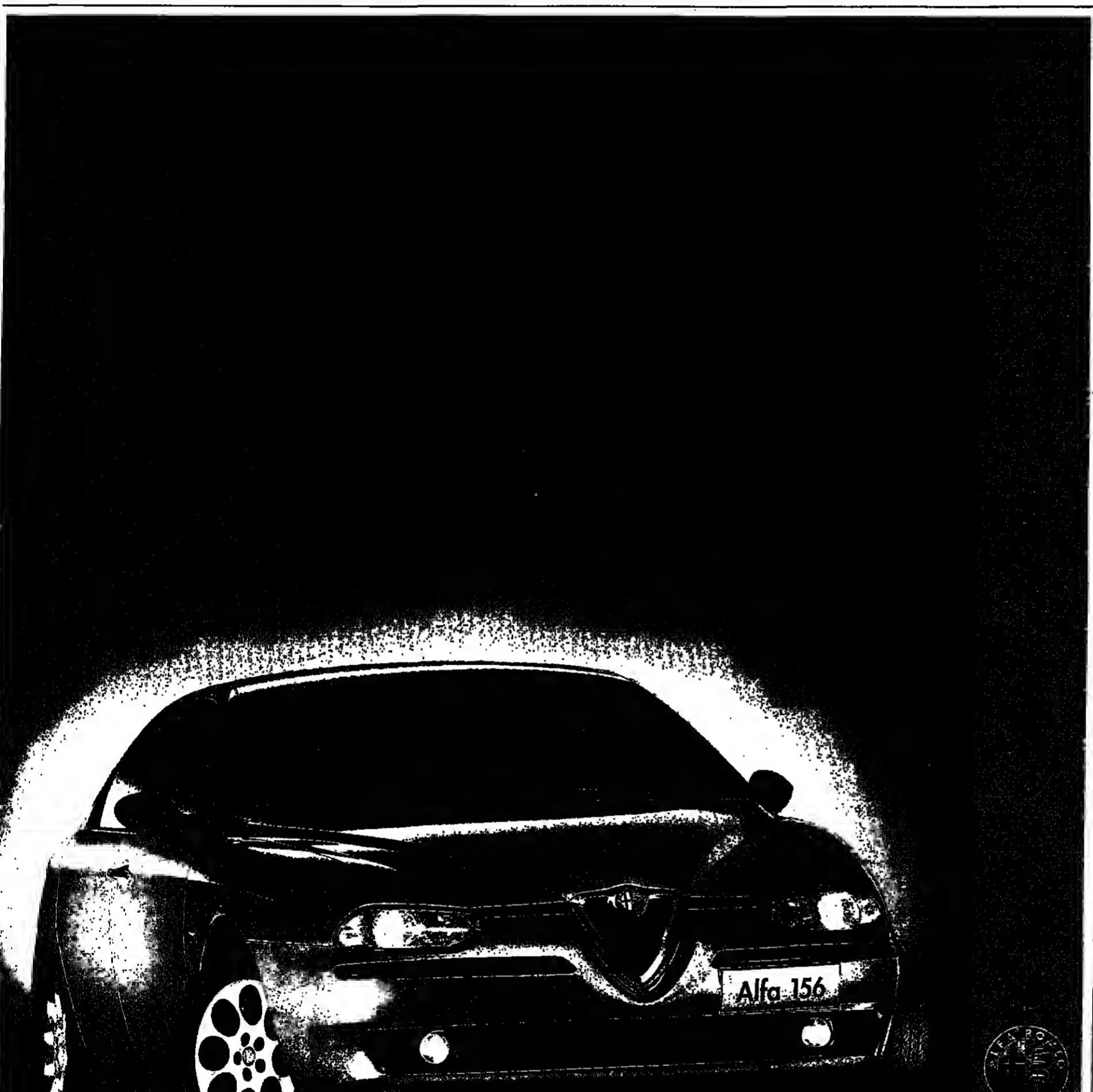
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A wind farm at Penyddian and Llidiarywaen, Powys. Wind energy producers urge Labour to show courage and back the industry. John Vos



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35 x Monthly Payments	£300.00 12.5% APR
1 x Final Payment*	£9,257.70
Total Amount Payable	£25,247.54

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Chris Vos

Labour rows back on wind power pledge

By PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

THE GOVERNMENT has been accused of ditching its manifesto commitment to boost wind and solar energy after it emerged that the policy had become mired in a Whitehall "turf war".

Environmentalists warned yesterday that Britain could be denied 30,000 new jobs and jeopardise efforts to cut greenhouse gases if ministers backed away from the pledge to generate 10 per cent of all electricity from renewable sources.

Both in opposition and soon after the election, Labour vowed to put "clean and green" energy sources such as wind farms and wave and solar power at the heart of electricity generation.

peatedly said he wants a "new and strong drive to develop renewable energy".

If the Government did commit itself to a target, it would then be able to place regular orders with the renewable energy industry, providing companies with the stability they claim they need to invest. Green groups claim that the contracts to build wind and wave turbines could breathe life back into Britain's traditional precision engineering base.

Nick Goodall, chief executive of the British Wind Energy Association, said the prospect of the Government backing away from the 10 per cent target was "plain scary. We've got to get it right now or we'll be the poor man of Europe with a laughably small renewables industry. The irony is we can supply all the pollution-free electricity they want if only they'd show a bit more courage," he said.

Ian Taylor, of the environmental campaign group Greenpeace, said that the delays would send a signal to investors that Britain was not the place to come to develop world-beating technology.

John Prescott, Secretary of State in the department, has already blocked several planning applications for wind farms and is believed to have made his objections largely relating to the impact on the landscape – clear to the DTI. But if the target is dropped, Mr Battle faces severe embarrassment as he has re-

Porn reprimand for councillors

By ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

LABOUR'S 10,400 local councillors are being warned not to misuse their personal computers after incidents of accessing pornographic material.

The party's ruling National Executive Committee (NEC) is expected to decide today to lift suspensions but reprimand two members of Shropshire County Council after a police investigation into porn on the Internet.

Four Shropshire councillors were charged under the Computer Misuse Act but the Crown Prosecution Service later dropped the charges.

A confidential report into the Shropshire affair, obtained by *The Independent*, reveals the Labour's inquiry panel found that Peter Taylor and Derek Woodvine were "not impressive" as witnesses and were "less than frank with their answers."

Councillor Taylor "admitted drawing down images" at home using a council modem but insisted he paid the phone cost. He strenuously denied accessing images connected with hard porn or paedophilia.

Councillor Woodvine told the Labour inquiry the police had been waiting for an opportunity to "stitch him up" after he criticised their handling of a murder case.

Both councillors blamed the problems which provoked the police investigation on two other councillors who subsequently left the Labour Party.

The panel proposed that Cllr Taylor be warned about his future conduct and Cllr Woodvine be reminded of his duty to protect the party's good name.

IN BRIEF

Teenagers die in suicide pact

POLICE LAUNCHED an investigation after two teenagers apparently took their own lives in a suicide pact, it was confirmed yesterday. The bodies of Leanne Elbeck, 16, and Damien Kilburn, 19, both of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, were found in a fume-filled car on Friday.

Bristol surgeon 'saint' and 'sinner'

A MOTHER yesterday praised one of the heart surgeons at the centre of the Bristol baby deaths inquiry, Janardan Dhasmana, for working skilfully to save her son's life. But another mother, whose child suffered brain damage after surgery, said the surgeon had misled her about the risks.

Record fine for train derailment

BALFOUR BEATTY was fined £500,000 at Chelmsford Crown Court after a train derailment – a record financial penalty for a railway accident. Its rail arm admitted a health and safety breach at Rivenham, Essex, in 1997.

Harassment case driver stopped

A BLACK motorist, Carl Josephs, who lost a harassment case against West Midlands Police earlier this year after claiming he was stopped 34 times in two years, alleges he has been pulled over three times since.

'Pay up' says quiz show man

ANDREW LAVELLE, who won £16,000 on the ITV quiz show *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* but was stripped of the cash for having £682 in debts has paid his fines to a court. He says the show should now give him the money.

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IN BRIEF
1 die in suicide pact
A man has died after an apparent
suicide pact with his partner in
the back of a car. The body of 21-year-old
John, from Walsall, was
found in a car in a car park in Walsall.

goon 'saint' and 'sinner'
The presenters of the best-known
British radio station, Radio 1, have been
showing off their 'saint' and 'sinner' sides
in a bid to attract listeners.

is-for train derailment
TV and radio bosses have been
urging the public to buy their services
as a way to help the BBC and the
Independent Television Authority (ITA) to
raise £100 million to help the rail industry
over the next three years.

ent case driver stopped
A car driver, who had a horrific
Mitsubishi Lancer, has been stopped
over the last year.

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A quiz show host, who has been
asked to leave the BBC, has been
asked to leave the BBC.

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Oscars orgy of glamour and trivia

GWYNETH PALTROW broke down in tears, right on cue. Roberto Benigni climbed over the furniture and became the first recipient of the Best Actor award in Oscar history to quote Dante - in Italian, no less.

Colin Powell was there, to pay tribute to this year's war movies, and so was Jesse "The Body" Ventura, the wrestler turned governor of Minnesota, for no discernible reason except to have a good time.

This year's Oscar delivered everything they were supposed to, an orgy of glamour and glorious meaninglessness that set out to be as much of an entertainment as any of the films it honoured. There were tears, laughter, and even a final upset as the favourite for Best Picture, the war drama *Saving Private Ryan*, was squeezed out at the last moment.

After a publicity battle of rare passion between Miramax, makers of *Shakespeare in Love*, and DreamWorks, the company behind *Ryan* (Whoopi Goldberg, the evening's presenter, described it as "fighting World War Three over World War Two"), it turned out to be *Shakespeare's* year, with seven awards including Best Picture, Best Actress (Gwyneth Paltrow), Best Supporting Actress (Judi Dench) and Best Original Screenplay (Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard).

But there was really something for everybody, or almost - a directing award for Steven Spielberg for *Saving Private Ryan*, a surprise Best Actor Oscar for Benigni that seemed to owe more to his charmingly outrageous appearances on US talk shows than to his performance in *Life is Beautiful*, a nod to the stunningly acted drama *Affliction* in the form of a Best Supporting Actor going for James Coburn, and another nod to the House Un-American Activities Committee at the height of the McCarthyite anti-Communist witchhunts of 1952.

After weeks of passionate debate about the merits of the award, hundreds of protesters, both pro and anti, turned up with banners outside the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in downtown Los Angeles where

BY ANDREW GUMBLE
Los Angeles

the Oscars were presented. Inside, the auditorium was divided between ardent champions of Kazan such as Warren Beatty, who became a star in Kazan's *Splendor in the Grass*, and detractors who believe Kazan owes the industry an apology for the careers he ruined to save his own.

Mr Jimmy, this is for you.

Oscar nominees Ed Harris and Nick Nolte were among those who pointedly refused to applaud him.

"It was a touch of real drama, to watch the spreading embarrassment through 2,000 people," another Oscar nominee, Sir Ian McKellen, said afterwards. "There was real confusion in the house."

Senior Academy members have admitted they would never have honoured Kazan if they had realised what passions the decision would unleash. The 89-year-old director all but squirmed as he hurriedly thanked the Academy for its "courage and generosity".

There was more embarrassment when Monica Lewinsky appeared at the post-Oscar *Vanity Fair* bash in Morton's restaurant in West Hollywood.

In a year of presidential scandal, Hollywood wore its support for President Clinton very much on its sleeve, with jokes flying at the expense of Lewinsky, Linda Tripp, Trent Lott and Kenneth Starr.

"Fifty million dollars down the drain," Whoopi Goldberg said of Starr's investigation. "For that kind of money we could've made five good movies."

Lewinsky, accompanied by her current boyfriend, movie-industry executive Jonathan Marshall, was laughed at, looked upon as a bit of a freak and, in some cases, roundly ignored.

"I'm not with her," said an adamant Bridget Fonda. "We staggered our arrivals so we wouldn't come in together." Jay Leno, the popular evening talk-show host, remarked: "She was under Table 14, I believe."

Howard Jacobson, Review front:
Leading article,
David Aaronovitch,
Review, page 3



Dame Judi Dench: Best Supporting Actress



Actor-director Roberto Benigni dances for joy over the seats after winning an Oscar for 'Life is Beautiful' AP

THE WINNERS

Best Picture: *Shakespeare in Love*, David Fincher, Dame Judi Dench, Harvey Weinstein, Edward Zwick and Marc Norman

Director: Steven Spielberg

Saving Private Ryan

Actor: Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*

Actress: Gwyneth Paltrow, *Shakespeare in Love*

Supporting actor: James Coburn, *Affliction*

Supporting actress: Judi Dench, *Shakespeare in Love*

Foreign film: *Life is Beautiful*, Italy

Screenplay (written directly for the screen): Marc Norman, Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*

Screenplay (based on material previously produced or published): Bill Condon, Gary and Monsters

Art direction: *Shakespeare in Love*, Martin Childs, art direction and Bill Gribble, production design

Costume design: *Saving Private Ryan*, Janie Bryant, *Shakespeare in Love*, Gary Rydstrom, Gary Hustwit, Andy Nelson, Ronald Jenkins

Sound effects editor: *Saving Private Ryan*, Gary Rydstrom and Richard Hymen

Original musical or comedy score: *Shakespeare in Love*, Stephen Warbeck

Original dramatic score: *Life is Beautiful*, Nicola Piovani

Original song: 'When You Believe' from *The Prince of Egypt*, Stephen Schwartz

Documentary feature: *The Last Days*, James Motl, Ken Lerner

Documentary (subject): *The Personal Impossibilities on Retirement in the Golden Years*, Nelly Re

Film editing: *Saving Private Ryan*, Michael Kahn

Make-up: Elizabeth, Jenny Shircore

Animated short film: *Bunny*, Chris Wedge

Live action short film: *Election Night*, Volgolent, Jani Magnusson and Anders Thomas Jensen

Visual effects: *What Dreams May Come*, Joel Hynek, Nicholas Brooks, Stuart Robertson and Kevin Mack

Scientific and technical award: Avid Technology Inc

Thalberg award: Producer-director Norman J. Wexler

Honorary award: Director

Ella Kazan (AP)

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Calculus, confusion and the question of elastic children

QUESTION: IF, as the Chancellor said in his budget statement recently, our children are 20 per cent of the population but 100 per cent of our future and if 10 per cent of our future is to benefit from new schemes to stretch intellectually able pupils, then what percentage of our population will have cause to be grateful for Mr Blunkett's announcement yesterday on Excellence in Education?

Examiners may not use a calculator, incidentally, given that mental arithmetic is part of the new numeracy strategy, and is to be restored from September. I can't answer my own question, incidentally.

which would presumably mean that, were I at school, I would not be plucked from the class to be given extra lessons in calculus.

On the other hand I might be deemed to be so disadvantaged that I qualified for special needs teaching, or become so agitated by my failure that I was eventually chosen for one of the disruptive learning units that the government also proposes setting up.

Tory MPs looked a little baffled too yesterday, faced with the conundrum of how to attack the Government for spending more money on educating disadvantaged children.

As Mr Blunkett reminded MPs,

the government had promised to modernise the comprehensive principle and yesterday he explained that this consisted of smuggling a miniaturised grammar school in through the back door of selected inner-city comprehensives.

Being a bit of a slow-streamer when it comes to education policy I couldn't immediately understand how this programme of turbo-boosting certain schools was to be carried out - it seemed to involve a complicated set of overlapping zones and frameworks that took me back to the dizzying enigmas of the Venn diagram. But one thing was clear - gifted pupils were to be

stretched. Mr Blunkett said this quite a lot, confident that child-stretching was one of those projects that no one could decently oppose.

What was less transparent was how to ask how the one school in his area that taught Latin could supply it to every eager pupil in Knowsley. Dennis Skinner then conjugated the verb *amo*, to love - proving unruly elements could be returned to the mainstream with the help of sympathetic mentoring.

Tory MPs couldn't work out either how selection both would and would not be part of the system. Even Labour MPs seemed oddly confused in truth. After David Willetts had asked for an assurance that bright children wouldn't be bussed about to get their specialist treatment, and after Mr Blunkett had scornfully delivered it, Eddie O'Hara stood up, furrow on his

forehead, to ask how the one school in his area that taught Latin could supply it to every eager pupil in Knowsley. Dennis Skinner then conjugated the verb *amo*, to love - proving unruly elements could be returned to the mainstream with the help of sympathetic mentoring. Mr Blunkett seemed cheered by this but then he was in celebratory mood anyway - he celebrated particular schools, he celebrated diversity, he celebrated the weekend schools set up by many black parents. He even "rejoiced" in a supportive inquiry from Michael Colvin, the Conservative member for Romsey. The only thing he execrated, in fact, was wealthy parents who lived in "leafy suburbs", the last phrase emerging with unexpected vigour in response to a question from John Wilkinson. It was as if the Minister had meant only to clear his throat but accidentally let rip a batch of Old Labour class hatred.

Julie Kirkbride, wearing a skirt that would have got her sent home by any self-respecting girls' school, responded with similar stridency - inviting him to support the principle of grammar school selection. Mr Blunkett wouldn't - he knows grammar schools have to be ground up very small if Labour MPs are to swallow them without choking.

THE SKETCH

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

Government blamed for local tax rises

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

THE GOVERNMENT came under fierce attack yesterday for forcing "massive hidden tax hikes" after it emerged that council taxes in England will rise by an average 6.8 per cent.

The Liberal Democrats

claimed that cuts in local government spending on health

and education meant that councils had to increase their taxes

from next month.

But Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government minister,

accused the party of trying to

shift blame from their councils

to central government.

"Much of local government

has moved on from the old politics of spend and blame and it

seems the Liberals have not

They have become apologists

for the old-style, municipal tax

and spend - high taxation, low

efficiency," she insisted.

She noted that the Standard

Spending Assessments (SSAs),

the amounts the Government

believes councils need to spend

to provide services, had in-

creased by 2.6 per cent. The

Government had also ended

the "crude and universal" council

tax capping.

Mr Burstow said it was not

a question of what local au-

thorities decided to spend "be-

cause over 75 per cent of what

they get to spend" was dictated

by central government.

Whitehall sources said Labour councils had a lower

than average council tax rise -

at 6.1 per cent compared with

the 6.8 per cent national aver-

age - and Tory councils higher

than average, at 7.6 per cent.

Accusing ministers of peddling "fantasy figures", Mr Burstow said the gap between what councils were spending and what the Government was funding was growing year by year and now stood at £2.3bn.

The Government predicted when it set spending levels for the coming financial year that if authorities kept their SSAs, council tax bills would rise by an average 4.5 per cent.

Mrs Armstrong stressed that 124 of England's 358 coun-

councils had set their council tax at or below their SSA increase for the coming year and many of the others had gone only slightly above.

Ministers are considering whether those councils spending above the guidelines should have to help pay for council tax benefit paid to poorer people, which is currently met by central government.

Whitehall sources said Labour councils had a lower than average council tax rise - at 6.1 per cent compared with the 6.8 per cent national average - and Tory councils higher than average, at 7.6 per cent.

Tony Blair (right) and Peter Mandelson, former trade and industry minister, at the Theatre Royal in central London yesterday as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children launched its 20-year campaign to put a full stop to child abuse. Paul Hackett

'Cynical' Monsanto branded public enemy number one

MONSANTO

FRAN ABRAMS
Westminster Correspondent

their wretched products on the world's population. They need to be brought within democratic control urgently.

"Monsanto could well be the bad news story of the 21st century if they are not stopped."

In a debate on the World Trade Organisation, Mr Baker said the firm's activities must be curtailed. "Monsanto are public enemy number one. They insist on thwarting consumer choice, bulldozing elected governments and forcing

and take samples from their land," Mr Baker said.

The US government was acting on behalf of Monsanto when it warned it would file for damages if the European Union continued to ban the firm's treated milk, he added. Farms in the US that attempted to label untreated milk were threatened with legal action.

In one of its most "cynical" moves to date, the firm had persuaded politicians and leaders in Africa that its technologies were a way to combat starvation. In India, some GM crops were grown without the farmers' knowledge until complaints

led to an injunction being granted by the supreme court. Plans to grow GM soya in Brazil this year would substantially reduce world supplies of conventional soya, Mr Baker added.

In Britain, Monsanto had launched a £1m advertising campaign that had made claims later condemned by the Advertising Standards Authority as "wrong - unproven, misleading and confusing".

Mr Baker also listed a number of examples to support his claim that company executives seemed to be in a "revolving door" to and from official government positions.

Straw 'regrets' Immigration Service chaos

ASYLUM BILL

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

target set in the Asylum Bill for dealing with future applications within six months. He also defended the proposals for denying asylum seekers cash benefits and instead giving them benefits in kind. He said the costs of such a system were justified by the number of non-genuine applicants who would be deterred by the lack of cash incentives.

Earlier, immigration officials had told the committee that the use of "intelligence-led passenger profiling" was bringing about a culture of institutional racism.

John Tincey, information director of the Immigration Service Union, said passengers were increasingly being targeted on account of their race or nationality. "Selectivity" in immigration control amounts to stereotyping and little else.

However, Mr Straw said he did not think the chaos was sufficiently worrying to reduce the

THE HOUSE

Nuclear arms

George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, pointed to the strength of Labour's conversion to retaining nuclear weapons when he said he was told by an ordinary party member that Britain should have more missiles, not fewer.

Labour Party members now valued the "insurance" nuclear weapons provided, he said.

Today's agenda

Commons: 2.30pm Scottish and Lord Chancellor's Department questions.

Local Government Bill.

Debate on millennium bug and European defence.

Lords: 2.30pm Youth Justice and Criminal

Evidence Bill, Disability

Rights Commission Bill.

Railways (Rateable Values) (Amendment) Order

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children

...was wealthy parents who lived in the suburbs. The last phrase, with unexpected vigour, response to a question from Elizabeth Wilkinson. It was as if the Minister had meant only to clear his throat but accidentally let rip a lot of Old Labour class hatred. Julie Kirkbride, wearing a shiny, self-righteous smile, responded with similar stringency, telling him to support the principle of grammar school selection. Mr. Wilfieff wouldn't be known. Mr. schools have to be brought up to allow them without choking.

More control sought on herbal cures

STRICTER CONTROLS should be imposed over the sale of herbal remedies because of the dangers of possible side-effects, according to scientists involved in studying the potential benefits of traditional medicines.

Many herbal remedies are sold as food supplements, enabling manufacturers to bypass the regulations imposed on licensed plant products.

The Government is under pressure from the European Union to tighten the sale of such remedies and the Department of Health has asked the Medicines Control Agency to review new control measures.

Baroness Hayman, a Health minister, yesterday announced a period of consultation before the Government took action. "The present regulatory arrangements have some limitations," she said.

"There is a sharp contrast between the rigorous requirements to demonstrate safety, quality and efficacy which apply to licensed herbal medicines, and the limited regulatory requirements which apply to unlicensed herbal medicines."

Professor Edzard Ernst, head of complementary medicine at Exeter University, told a scientific meeting in London that there was little excuse for treating herbal remedies any differently from other medicines with proven benefits. There has been nearly a four-

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

fold increase in herbal treatments in the UK since 1990 and although no similar figures are available in Britain, Professor Ernst said that anecdotal evidence suggests traditional medicine is experiencing a similar increase in popularity.

Professor Ernst said existing controls were not enough. "The present situation is unsatisfactory because it doesn't guarantee that the consumer is protected. There are certain side-effects from herbal remedies and a lack of control invites all sorts of cowboy behaviour," he said.

The World Health Organisation has registered about 9,000 cases of side-effects caused by people taking herbal remedies, mostly caused by allergic reactions or the effects of contamination and adulteration.

Bart Halkes, an expert in herbal remedies at the University of Utrecht, said many traditional medicines are inherently impure products.

"Contaminants most likely to be found in crude medicinal herbs include heavy metals such as lead, mercury and cadmium, pesticides or herbicides, microorganisms and also microbiological toxins, such as aflatoxin, and radioactive isotopes," Dr Halkes said.

Deliberate adulteration, due

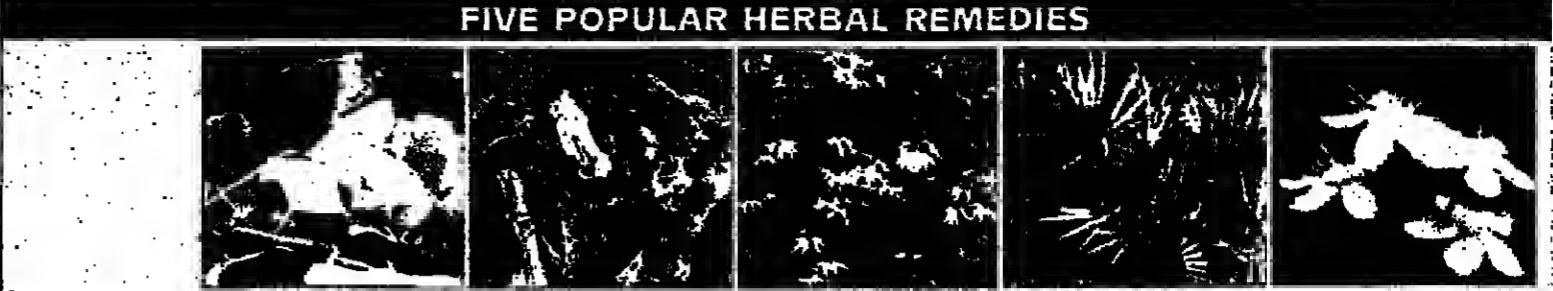
to either incompetence or ignorance, is also a problem, he said. "Adverse reactions may also be due to the use of concentrates or specifically processed extracts of plants which are known to affect the uptake of other drugs in the body."

Elizabeth Wilkinson, who studies the effects of herbal remedies at the University of London, said there was no such thing as an effective medicine that did not have side-effects.

"There should be more control over unlicensed herbal medicines. The trouble is that people are selling any old rubbish as a food supplement," she said.

The aromatherapy debate,

Health, Review, page 11



FIVE POPULAR HERBAL REMEDIES

WHAT IS IT, WHERE IS IT FOUND?	GINKGO BILOBA	KAVA	ECHINACEA	SAW PALMETTO	ST JOHN'S WORT
Old Chinese tree, but grows abundantly around the world. The leaves are used as a medicine					
WHAT IS IT SUPPOSED TO DO?					
Traditionally associated with relieving circulatory disorders. More recently, said to help slow the onset of senile dementia. Contains a number of active ingredients					
IS THERE EVIDENCE IT WORKS?					
Used traditionally as a recreational drink because of its relaxing properties. A known psycho-active drug, it is currently being studied as a possible anti-depressive					
ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS?					
Good anecdotal evidence to ease problems with blood system. Clinical trials in Germany and US indicate a positive effect in averting the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease					
Hardly any. Occasional allergy problems. May react with blood-thinning drugs used on patients with heart disease					

At least 10 clinical trials indicate that it is better than a placebo and as good as some mild tranquilisers at calming anxiety symptoms

Some evidence, mostly anecdotal and controversial. Some trials show it works, others indicate it has no effect. The jury's out

Mild stomach upsets, and probably not to be used with synthetic tranquilisers

Gastro-intestinal upsets: quite dramatic allergic reactions reported in some people

Virtually none. A potential mild stomach upset, and winner, according to some experts

About 20 trials conducted that indicate there is good reason to believe there is something to the anecdotal reports

Supposed to help alleviate the symptoms of benign prostate problems in men, who have difficulty urinating. Scientists are still trying to work out how it works

Supposed to help mild or moderate depression. Traditionally used as a tonic, and a treatment for mood disorders. Unclear what the active ingredients may be

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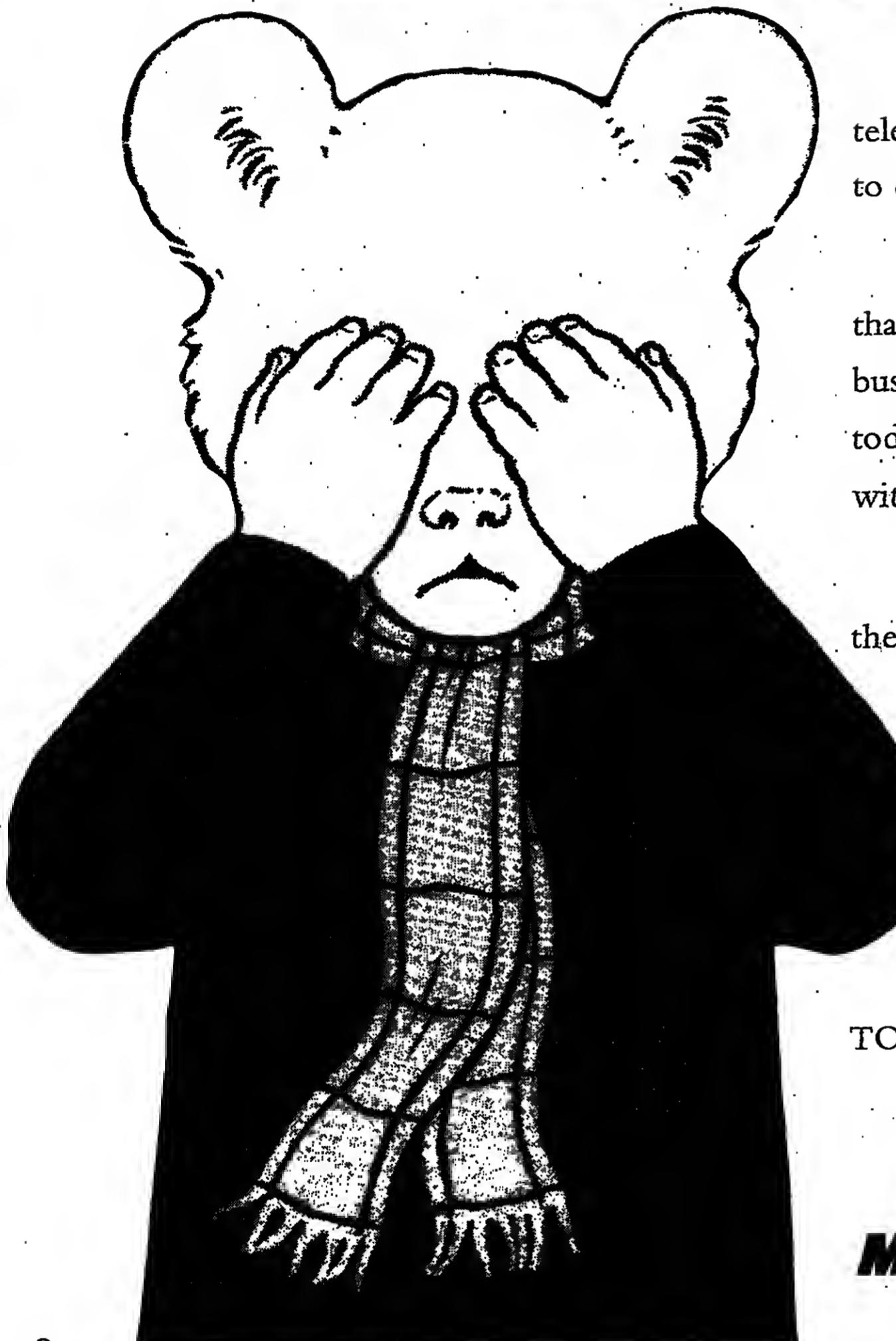
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PLEASE DON'T CLOSE YOUR EYES. TO CRUELTY TO CHILDREN.



You may have seen the NSPCC's recent television and poster campaign, asking people not to close their eyes to cruelty to children.

At the heart of this campaign lies the belief that protecting children from cruelty is everyone's business. That is why we are asking for your help today...because only by working in partnership with you can we achieve our goal.

Please sign the pledge below and return it to the address shown right now.

Signing the pledge is your way of telling us that you, too, want a future where all children are loved and protected, and that you will do what you can to help.

TOGETHER WE WILL STOP CRUELTY
TO CHILDREN - FULL STOP.

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Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

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SIGN HERE TO STOP CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

My PLEDGE in Partnership with the NSPCC

I promise to do all I can to help stop cruelty to children.

TITLE (Mr/Ms/Ms) INITIALS SURNAME
ADDRESS BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

POSTCODE
 I am under 18 and my date of birth is: / / 006924

X
SIGNED

I believe that protecting children is everybody's business and want a future where all children are loved and protected. Please send me information for the boxes I have ticked below:

PARTNER IN FUNDRAISING.

Please tell me how to help at a local level e.g. delivering leaflets, or organising fundraising events of my own.

PARTNER IN CAMPAIGNING.

Please tell me how I can help spread awareness of the problem, distribute information and campaign for important new child protection measures through Parliament.

PARTNER IN GIVING.

Please tell me how I can support the NSPCC with a gift, to help protect more children from harm.

Everyone requesting further information will be sent our 'Partners in Protecting' leaflet which has details on how to protect children as part of your everyday life.
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Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

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John Minton



Will Kosovo be Europe's Vietnam?

WITH THE withdrawal of the international monitors from Kosovo, Nato has burnt its last bridge of credibility. To have done so – and then not raise a finger as Slobodan Milosevic wreaked his vengeance on the Albanians – would rank with Munich 1938 or Budapest 1956 as a Western betrayal. So unless the Yugoslav President, in his meetings with the US special envoy, stares into the whites of Richard Holbrooke's eyes and blinks, we have to assume air strikes will go ahead – within three days at most.

What happens next, even the most bemused television studio strategist will hesitate to guess. In terms of military capability, national will and possible unintended consequences, few recent conflicts are so hard to read. Few are so short of obvious parallels. Generals, proverbially, are always tempted to refight the last war. But in the case of Kosovo, which war?

Kosovo, it may safely be

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

said, is not Vietnam. For whereas Vietnam was populated by Vietnamese, less than 10 per cent of Kosovo's 2 million inhabitants are Serb. And unlike Hanoi, Belgrade has shown no stomach to endure aerial bombardment "for a generation" to secure its goals. But then again, Kosovo and Serbia are not Iraq – a bare, flat land where targets are hard to hide and the enemy's capacity for self-defence (pace the apocalyptic warnings of Tony Blair and George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence) is derisory.

In terms of terrain, this looming Balkan war will be like Balkan wars before it, fought across hills, forests and scattered population centres. For Andrew Brooks of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, it is in some ways "a big Switzerland. The forces are dispersed, they've dug a lot of holes in mountains, there's

a tradition of fighting for soil, they can't be taken out in one fell swoop".

This is the tough-as-nails Serbia of legend, which President Milosevic does nothing to discourage. Nato has crushing air superiority, more than 400 top-of-the-line Western aircraft, against 80 Soviet-built planes, mostly ageing MiG-21s. However, "while you can destroy air defence centres", says Mr Brooks, "Belgrade has mobile radar units, and a lot of people with surface-to-air missiles".

Then there is the matter of targets. It is assumed that in a first phase, Nato will go for communications and air defence sites and swiftly thereafter ammunition depots. But eight years ago, an even larger onslaught failed to knock out many of Iraq's scud missile units. And if Yugoslav armour on the ground is directly targeted, the lesson of Chechnya and similar conflicts is that infantry and artillery dispersed in rough country can stand up to a massive



Milosevic: Will he back down as he did over Bosnia?

amount of air bombardment. Assuming, of course, they have

crash so easily this time? Bosnia, after all, was a sovereign independent state. Kosovo is, legally, a part of the republic of Serbia. Will it really be surrendered so easily?

And Nato is operating under constraints its opponents need not observe. Presumably special force operatives are already among the men on the ground, able to pinpoint targets for the attacking aircraft. Even so, Nato governments will insist their pilots hit the right targets with the smallest possible "collateral damage" – the unintended killing of innocent civilians – and debris such as last summer's destruction of the pharmaceuticals factory in Sudan.

Analysts say Belgrade may already have shifted ammunition depots into urban areas, making cruise missiles harder to use. Pinpoint bombs are still best launched from planes with human beings at the controls. If so, many experts predict, Nato losses will be inevitable,

with uncertain political consequences back home.

Small wonder Nato leaders pray that a small dose of bombing does the trick – that Mr Milosevic then convinces hardliners that he has done all he can, and that the Kosovo game is up. But suppose it doesn't. Suppose rather that this most cynical of politicians, whose overriding goal is survival, calculates that any surrender spells his own political (conceivably even physical) demise.

So he fights on. His air defences bring down allied aircraft, perhaps with the loss of their pilots. At this point, Nato will have lost control of events. The tidal logic of war takes over.

The air strikes are widened to embrace infrastructure targets such as roads, rail lines and power stations. The message is now addressed to the Serbian people as a whole: this is what happens when your leader defies Nato.

But in the process the alliance becomes ever more the

de facto air force of the Kosovo Liberation Army, finessed into providing cover for the insurgents to launch a land offensive. Its neutrality would be a sham. And, unlike Bosnia four years ago, all this without the backing of the United Nations – indeed in the teeth of the unalloyed opposition of two of the five veto-holding permanent members of the Security Council, one of them Serbia's traditional ally, Russia.

At this point nerves in London and Paris would be at snapping point. But what if Mr Milosevic still fails to see the light, while his forces, quite possibly resupplied by Russia, retain enough firepower to savage the ethnic Albanians? The last, worst scenario becomes reality. Nato is faced with the choice of ignominiously calling it quits, widening the bombing further and thus rallying Serbs behind their leader – or doing what it has vowed it will never do, sending ground troops into a "non-permissive" environ-

ment in plain English, an invasion of sovereign Yugoslavia and the launch of a land war against Belgrade.

Yesterday, Paddy Ashdown warned the West to plan for precisely this. Logically, he is correct, for the lesson of Bosnia is that if the West wants to impose a Balkan peace where both sides have to make do with less than all they want – in this case an autonomous Kosovo that is still part of Serbia – a protectorate policed by Nato peace-keepers is the only way to achieve it. But logic can have unpalatable conclusions. If they get it wrong, the Liberal Democrat leader warns, the big powers will be "on the threshold of a major ground conflict on the mainland of Europe... closer than at any time in the second half of the 20th century". Major ground conflict in Europe? At this point Kosovo's parallels come from the first, not the second, half of the century. Far-fetched they may be, but they are also truly terrifying.

Ferocious Serb assault opens with executions

BY EMMA DALY
in Srbica

AS THEIR houses burnt, terrified Albanians from the little town of Srbica in Kosovo told of the execution of more than 20 Albanians during the first day of a Yugoslav offensive. It began as international ceasefire monitors were evacuated from Kosovo on Saturday morning.

Babies cried and women wept as they described the Serbs' ferocious assault. "They came to our house wearing green uniforms and black masks," Adil Mustafa said. "They shelled our house in the morning, and the door was broken, we couldn't close it. They came in, shouting... you can see for yourself," she continued, gesturing towards thick plumes of smoke rising from houses burning near by.

The Serb soldiers and police could be seen sheltering behind armoured vehicles close to the police station, although most of the fire seemed to be coming out of Srbica, not coming in.

The buses overloaded with refugees and the burning houses evoked sinister echoes of the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and the bloody bouts of "ethnic cleansing" that accompanied it.

"My husband and my sons were taken on Saturday, and we have no news of them," Mrs Mustafa continued, her eyes brimming with tears. "That day, they rounded up about 10 men and took them up the hill, and we heard shooting." Behind her, a bus overloaded with refugees set off for the northern town of Mitrovica. "It's better to kill us than to terrify us like this," she said.

But the Serbs are killing them. Ferad Zenuni, 85, said they had seized his 35-year-old son, Mohamet, on Saturday, before ordering the family to leave. "Women, children and older men were pushed out of the house, and younger men were kept inside," he said, weeping. "I wept inside," he continued. "I saw a lot of blood in my garden."



An ethnic Albanian refugee feeding her grandson near the Kosovo-Macedonia border yesterday. Damar Sagolj

and a bloodied axe. I am afraid that maybe they killed my son." Another woman was walking back to Srbica yesterday to find the children and grandchildren she lost in the conflict on Saturday. "I saw with my own eyes that they killed a man," Dina Shaqiri said. "He was in front of his house, in the doorway. They were wearing white uniforms and black masks, and they asked him for his guns. He said, 'I have no weapons', but they still killed him. They shot him with a big rifle, from close by," she said.

"I was on the third floor, and from my window I saw them take about 20 Albanian men, they surrounded them and killed them all," she continued. Mrs Shaqiri said she also saw

two Serbian policemen killed by rebels from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), who were on the hill opposite the main road. And she claimed to have seen the bodies of two men, the sons of Osman Musa, lying on the road outside the police station.

Another woman said that men had been taken to jail in the nearest large town. "My husband was in Mitrovica prison but they let him go and told him to pass the message to Srbica people to go to Mitrovica to collect the bodies. They said Sabit Veliqi is dead, along with some people from Lausha with the surname of Vujvoda." We never got her name, since the police moved us along.

Baton Haxhiu, editor of Koha Ditore newspaper, said

that he had reports of 16 people killed, including an acquaintance, Sabit Veliqi. East of the town, a tank sat on a hill close to a burning house, the muzzle-flash visible as it fired towards rebel positions in Drenica, until recently the KLA stronghold. North, the refugee buses and our cars were held up for 30 minutes while a combined police and army force fired across the road into Drenica.

Three policemen strolled out of a house next to the road as smoke billowed out and flames shattered the windows. Before long, flames were surging through the roof and it was time for the convoy to move on.

Back in Srbica, Mrs Mustafa – crying again – said: "The police just came past now and told us to go back to our houses, but how can we return to burnt houses filled with a lot of smoke?"

She could not have known that about 20 miles to the south, thousands more Albanians were on the move, having fled their homes in the villages around Malisevo during the night, because of heavy fire in the area. Journalists stuck in the town of Glogovac, held by Serbs, on Sunday evening, heard outgoing artillery and rocket fire.

"The children were terrified, when they heard the shooting and shelling they were so frightened they were crying, so we had to leave," said Mohamet, who fled his home near Trpeza village, with his wife, seven children, grandchildren, and his mother, who is paralysed. "We left at 11 o'clock at night, and because of the situation, we drove without lights, in a tractor convoy, along very bad roads."

The family is now camped, with dozens more, in the dilapidated school building in Drenovac village. Their plight indicates that the Serb offensive is moving south. It bodes ill for the thousands of Albanians still living in the rolling hills of southern Drenica. Unless Nato strikes, they will be next.

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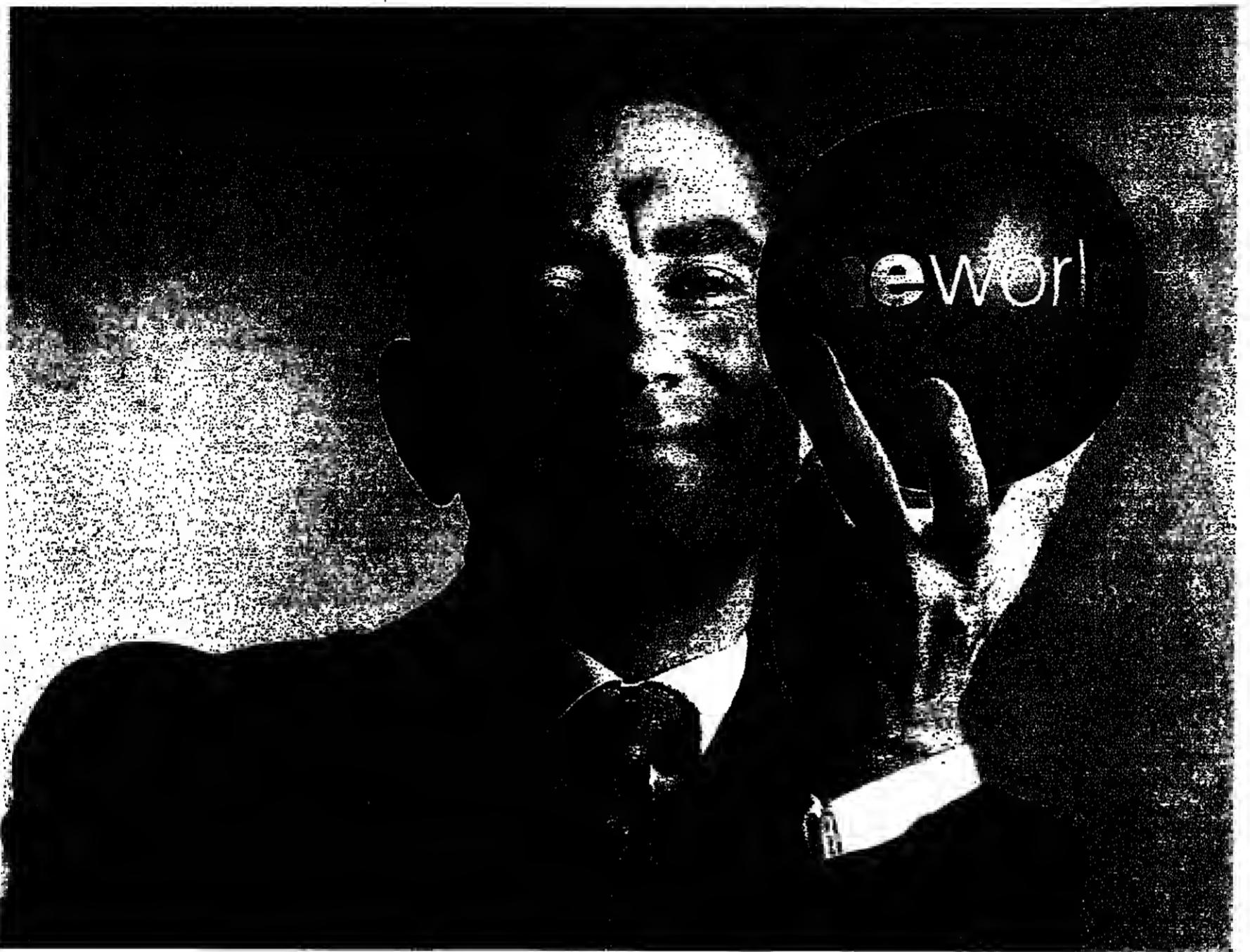
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Prodi tipped to head EU

EUROPEAN UNION leaders look likely to choose a successor to Jacques Santer as president of the European Commission by the time they wrap up a summit meeting in Berlin on Friday morning.

Last night the field of candidates had narrowed to two: Romano Prodi, the former Italian prime minister and Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister.

Mr Prodi, the clear favourite, has already been publicly endorsed by most of the 15 governments. In London, British ministers said he was now the strong favourite: "There is a growing consensus behind

BY KATHERINE BUTLER
in Brussels
AND ANDREW GRICE

him," said one. The ministers hope agreement on his appointment might be reached at the summit of EU leaders in Berlin starting tomorrow, although the German hosts say it may take longer.

Downing Street said yesterday that Mr Prodi was "a very high quality person" and a "real reformer".

Although Tony Blair's spokesman said the same description would apply to Wim Kok, he had "given every indi-

cation he is unlikely to be a candidate".

Privately both the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and Mr Blair, have indicated they have a preference for Mr Kok. Mr Blair's spokesman sought to allay fears that the choice of an Italian might damage the EU's image in Britain because of the spate of corruption scandals in Italy. "It's pretty insulting to suggest the northern states are all clean and the southern ones corrupt," he said.

Michael Howard, the shadow foreign secretary, said Mr Blair's backing for the former Labour's Pauline Green, leader of the socialists, the biggest faction in the 625-member parliament, said her group

wanted a new presidential candidate designated at Berlin. The new president should be "experienced, competent and committed to in-depth reform". Socialists wanted "a whole new Commission in place with speed, properly ratified by this Parliament using the powers that will be given to us in the incoming Amsterdam Treaty".

Enforcing the terms of the Treaty early would also give the new president the right to refuse the names of individual commissioners put forward by the national governments. Germany's Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, promised MEPs that his government, which holds the EU presidency, is now hoping for parliamentary ratification of the new Commission president by mid-April. That would require a political agreement on the candidate at or shortly after the Berlin meeting, which opens tomorrow.

Mr Blair is edging to a compromise deal over the special rebate on Britain's contributions to the EU, which is worth £2bn a year. The Prime Minister would accept a new formula that would reduce the value of the rebate - but only because Britain's payments to Brussels would also fall.

Finn PM sneaks home in tight poll

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

TO MUCH relief in Brussels, Paavo Lipponen looked likely to hang on to power yesterday as Finland's Prime Minister at the head of a centrist, pro-EU coalition, after earlier seeming to face defeat in a cliffhanger general election on Sunday.

Thanks to a surge in late returns, Mr Lipponen's Social Democratic Party pipped the agrarian Centre party to remain the largest single party with 51 seats, against 48 for the Centre Party and 46 for the Conservative Party. Mr Lipponen's main partner in the ruling "rainbow coalition".

A similar alliance is expected to underpin the next government, but after their best electoral performance the Conservatives are likely to demand an increase in their five cabinet seats.

The premier, considered his country's most powerful politician ahead of President Martti Ahtisaari, was the driving force behind Finland's entry into the single currency, cementing the transition from it being an uneasy neighbour of Russia to the European mainstream. He is seen as a key to a successful Finnish presidency of the EU later this year.



Brady Tucker, 4 (left) and her cousin Terina Tucker, 6, looking out nervously from the evacuation centre at Saint Luke's college in Karratha, Western Australia yesterday. They were evacuated from the coastal town of Onslow as cyclone Vance approached. AP

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Woman dies in 'satanic ritual'

BY ELIZABETH NASH
in Madrid

A BELGIAN woman aged 35 died near the town of Alicante in southern Spain after being subjected to ritual satanic abuse in her own home, Spanish police said yesterday. Her Spanish husband was among four suspects detained in connection with the death, apparently caused by a ritual attempt to drive evil spirits from her body.

Nataly Castlesor was admitted to hospital in a coma on Saturday with her body covered with knife wounds and burns, according to reports. She died shortly afterwards from heart and respiratory failure caused by the wounds.

The victim had lived a few miles from the village of L'Alfàs del Pi near the resort town of Alicante on the Costa Blanca for several years. A search of the detached house she shared with her husband and their two sons, eight and five months, turned up implements and objects "that point to the activities carried out by a ritual sect", the authorities said.

The four suspects, two men and two women, appeared in court yesterday to make a statement, and a woman was subsequently freed.

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Patel in £214m bid for health group

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

CHAI PATEL is making a comeback in the healthcare sector with a recommended cash offer for Westminster Health Care Holdings that values the nursing homes group at £214m.

Dr Patel, former chairman of Court Cavendish Group and former chief executive of CareFirst Group, has formed a new vehicle, Canterbury Healthcare (CHC), to take Westminster private.

The offer is worth 311p per share, representing a premium of 68 per cent over the closing price of Westminster on 19 March. There will be a partial loan note alternative available.

Dr Patel said Westminster's board had unanimously agreed to recommend that shareholders accept the offer. He said: "We very much want to work with Westminster's management.

The nursing home sector has been through a very difficult period. But we're taking a long-term view, and over the long term the prospects for the sector are very good," he said.

Dr Patel will become chief executive of the enlarged group, while Westminster's chief executive, Pat Carter, will act as a consultant. Mr Carter owns about 3 per cent of Westminster's stock, or 2.7 million shares, worth £2.3m under the terms of the deal.

The deal fitted with the vehicle's long-term growth strategy, said Dr Patel. Canterbury's investors include private equity funds managed by US investment bank Goldman Sachs, as well as a number of large US healthcare funds.

Westminster, which is one of the UK's largest private-sector healthcare providers to the elderly, has 95 nursing homes with about 5,800 beds. It made pre-tax profits before exceptional items of £16.1m in the year to 31 May 1998 on sales of £134.6m.

The principal investors in CHC will be Whitehall Street Real Estate Limited Partnership XI, GS Capital Partners (funds affiliated with Goldman Sachs), an American healthcare fund called Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe and WCAS Capital Partners.

Canterbury is also backed by Anthony Heywood, a long-time colleague of Dr Patel and a former finance director of Court Cavendish Group and former executive director of CareFirst.

News Analysis: This time oil price rises may stick, spelling near-term economic danger

Why Opec's back in business

BY LEA PATERSON

THE ORGANISATION of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), which meets in Vienna today, is back in business as a key influence on world oil production.

After several years during which Opec's ability to influence oil prices has waned, there are high hopes that it will be able to strike a deal to curb production and provide a much-needed boost to the oil industry.

Oil prices have already soared to a five-month high amid market hopes of effective Opec action. Two weeks ago, at a pre-summit meeting in the Netherlands, key Opec members hammered out a series of proposals for production cuts.

Talk of production cuts was, in itself, nothing new. Just last year, for example, Opec agreed a range of supply reductions, but widespread cheating on quotas meant there was no substantial impact on prices.

This time round, though, the market seems to be convinced that Opec - which is expected to implement its pre-summit proposals in Vienna today - can make the new quota stick. As a result, oil prices are running almost 40 per cent higher than they were during the autumn's 12-year lows.

Analysts have identified several factors that should help to support the oil price in the short term. First, there are political considerations. Part of the reason why supply cutbacks failed to materialise last year was a long-running rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Last year, Iran was not actively involved in negotiating the quotas, and objected vehemently to the cuts proposed by rival Opec nations. In recent weeks there has been an attempt at reconciliation by Saudi Arabia and Iran, Opec's two largest producers, with Saudi's Prince Abdullah doing much of the running.

The two nations have been spearheading this latest attempt to cap oil supply. "Saudi Arabia and Iran seemed to have patched up their difficulties," said Stephen Lewis, chief economist at Monument Derivatives. "The shift in the Saudi position is a new element in the situation."

Second, it has historically been easier for Opec to implement production cuts when oil prices are rising, as they are at the moment, than when they are falling, as they were for most of last year. As Mr Lewis said: "If Opec governments are able to recuperate through higher prices the potential losses in revenues stemming from production cuts, they can afford to be more relaxed about the situation than when both output and prices are declining."

Third, the economic havoc wreaked by the recent low oil prices in Opec countries - many of which are almost wholly dependent on oil revenues - has toughened the political will to make the new quota work.

Senior officials from all the Opec nations have been talking tough in recent days. There has been a realisation throughout the region that if Opec doesn't

act, the economic misery will only get worse.

In the short term, therefore, the market seems convinced that oil will hold on to its recent price gains. However, in the longer term sentiment is far more bearish. Few experts believe the oil price will continue to chalk up sizeable gains.

Fewer still think Opec will achieve its stated aim of pushing the price of West Texas Intermediate, currently running at around \$15 a barrel, back to the \$18 to \$20 range.

Fundamentals are weak - world oil demand is expected to grow by only 1 per cent this

year, while stock overhangs in oil-producing countries remain high. The incentives to cheat on the quotas will increase as the oil price rises. And Opec is far less powerful than it was during the 1970s, when it had a virtual stranglehold over oil supply. It now controls less than one-third of world production.

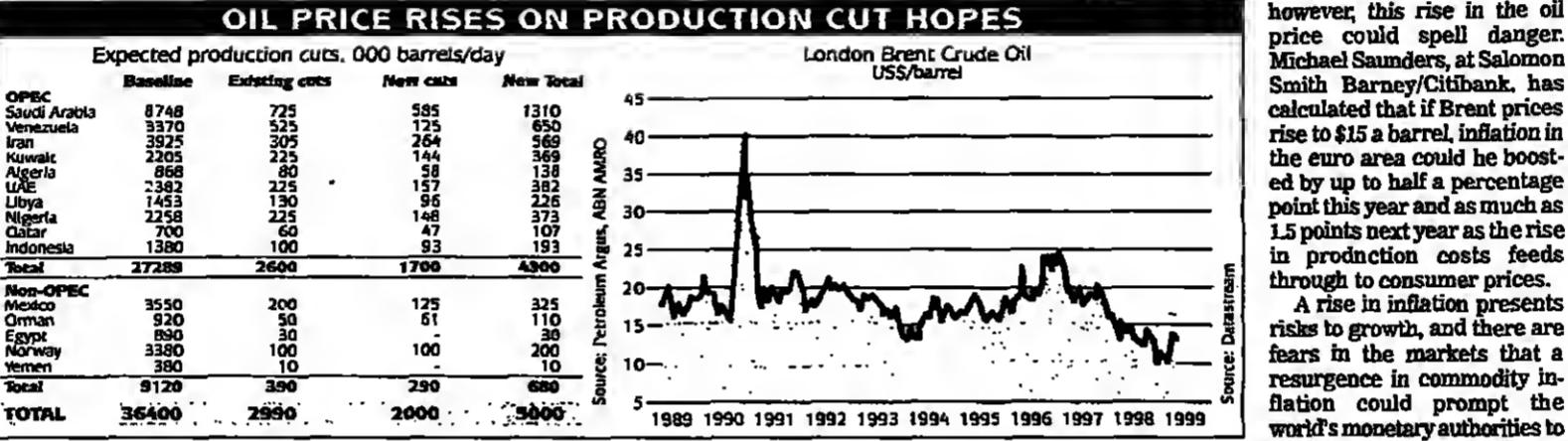
Rachel Beaver, analyst at ABN Amro, said: "Last week's surge in oil prices clearly owed more to sentiment than to fundamentals, which indicate demand remaining sluggish, stocks high and spare upstream capacity."

Even if the oil price falls

short of Opec's optimistic expectations, its recent mini-recovery has important implications for the world economy. For the world's oil producers, it's great news. London benchmark Brent crude now stands at around \$15.50 a barrel, well off last year's low of less than \$10.

Industry rule-of-thumb is that it is difficult for most producers to make any money at all when London Brent falls below \$12 a barrel. Not surprisingly, then, the recent turn of events has put a smile back on the faces of oil barons the world over.

For the rest of the economy,



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CRC Group (F)	33.42m (25.708m)	2.29m (2.01m)	13.7p (12.5p)	40 (40)	19.05.99 10.04.99	
FBD Holdings (F)	11.065m (15.955m)	1.68m (14.25m)	35.1p (30.7p)	10.35p (11.75p)	–	–
Flying Flowers (F)	52.051m (43.341m)	4.24m (3.83m)	13.7p (12.0p)	7.35p (7.25p)	1p 1p	19.04.99
Friends Ivory & Sons (10 units)	35.70m (–)	14.05m (–)	9.43p (–)	–	0.68p (0.53p)	01.06.99 29.05.99
Meristem (F)	29.15m (32.36m)	0.975m (3.58m)	3.5p (10.4p)	1.6p (2.4p)	0.46p (0.99)	01.06.99 01.06.99
Monsoon Oil & Gas (F)	81.25m (89.35m)	7.01m (15.62m)	0.91p (0.74p)	–	–	–
Neuber HealthCare Group (F)	9.004m (9.07m)	3.33m (11.21m)	5.25p (3.21p)	15.5p (15.5p)	01.07.99 04.05.99	
Newspac (F)	22.3m (21.72m)	12.6m (12.5m)	11.75p (11.54p)	21.7p (11.54p)	24.05.99 20.04.99	
Peptides Therapeutics (F)	0.731m (1.32m)	–7.5m (6.5m)	–20.7p (18.1p)	6p (–)	23.05.99 12.04.99	
Rainco Energy (F)	7.177m (15.85m)	–0.465m (0.494m)	–1.35p (1.45p)	–	–	–
Robens Group (F)	114.2m (113.2m)	21.58m (19.19p)	8p (–)	0.05.05.99 29.03.99		
South Country Homes (F)	–133.735m (149.153m)	–1.66p (1.74p)	–	–	–	–
Transfix (F)	309.926m (345.526m)	6.1p (7.1p)	2.6p (2.7p)	12.07.99	07.05.99	
TT Group (F)	619.926m (631.6m)	65m (62.5m)	27.5p (25.2p)	9.75p (8.75p)	27.05.99 10.05.99	
Wesco Group (F)	32.976m (32.765m)	1.907m (1.874m)	2.3p (2.3p)	0.75p (0.6p)	03.05.99 19.04.99	
(F) - Final (I) - Interim * Before Exceptions						

CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR NEW JUSTICES' LICENCE
LICENSING ACT 1964
COURT: Horseridge Road
Magistrates' Court, London SW1
HEARING DATE: 8 April 1999 at 10.30am
PREMISES: Pasto Brown, 356 Bow Street, London WC2
APPLICANT: Mark A. 33a Heron Hill Gardens, Clerkenwell, London EC1
TRADE OR CALLING: Director/Licence
APPLICANT: Paul Brown
ADDRESS: 14 Townsend Avenue, Southgate, London, N14
TRADE OR CALLING: Director
NOTICE that the Applicants intend to apply at the Licensing Sessions for the said Division to be held on the 8th April 1999 at 10.30am to the premises named above for the grant to them of a Restaurant Licence authorising them to sell by retail intoxicating liquor of all descriptions for consumption on or off the above premises.
Dated: 17 March 1999
PASHER & CO
Bonne House, 154 Fleet Street, London EC4 2DQ
Solicitors and Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the said Applicants

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High hopes: Nigeria's oil minister, Rasheed Abiodun Gbadamosi, arrives at a Vienna hotel for the crucial Opec summit today Ronald Zok/AP

IN BRIEF

Victory considers buying Cadoro
VICTORY, the holding company for Richard Branson's Virgin Clothing company, said it was considering buying Cadoro, the menswear retailer, after lending the company \$5.2m in a failed bid to stop it collapsing. In the past five weeks, Victory has lent the money to Cadoro, which sells Virgin Clothing and owns the Capito Roma brand, to avert a cash flow crisis, but yesterday the company went into administration.

Victory, an AIM-listed company 55 per cent owned by Mr Branson, is now in talks with PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the administrators, over the purchase of Cadoro.

Flowers droops

SHARES IN Flying Flowers, the troubled mail-order plants group, tumbled 7 per cent to 205p yesterday after the group announced a 19 per cent fall in profits. The company, which last week announced the departure of its chairman and two other directors, said sales at its key Gardening Direct division were unlikely this year to return to 1997 levels.

Schroder assets

SHARES IN Schroder Ventures International Investment Trust jumped by 13 per cent to 235.5p as the company said its assets had risen in value by one-third. Net asset value per share rose to 287.7p as the company revalued its stake in Charles Vogele, a Swiss clothing retailer that plans to float later this year.

Nationwide free

NATIONWIDE BUILDING Society said it is abolishing all charges for using cash machines in any part of the world. Current account holders will be able to make withdrawals at

No point in this supermarket probe

THE SUPERMARKETS have become resigned in recent weeks to the likelihood of a full Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation, both of their prices and the way they treat suppliers. The Office of Fair Trading is expected to publish the findings of its preliminary probe by the end of the month and, given what the Chancellor said in the Budget about his determination to crack down on "rip-off" Britain, the industry expects a reference shortly thereafter.

Nobody outside the City has much sympathy for the big supermarket groups, but even so, it is hard to see what an MMC inquiry is going to achieve, outside some political point-scoring.

There may be something to be said for putting the frighteners on an industry which undoubtedly attempts to squeeze both customers and suppliers in equal degree. But even if some form of complex monopoly, or series of local monopolies, does exist, what can the Government do about it? Another Price Commission? Heaven forbid. With the brewers, the Government settled on a break-up, but it didn't stop the price of beer from continuing to rise.



OUTLOOK

The truth of the matter is that it is possible to find most things that supermarkets sell at cheaper, and sometimes considerably cheaper, prices. Furthermore, most consumers know this. But it is inconvenient and very time-consuming to shop in this way. The trade-off, then, is between higher prices and inconvenience. The higher grocery prices that car-less people in deprived areas pay is a different issue.

In fact, there are two obvious solutions to the problem of high supermarket prices. First we could join the euro, giving consumers access to the economies of scale that spring from extremely large trading regions. Second, we could allow our green and

pleasant land to be ploughed up for the development of American style shopping malls, and the roads to service them. Fundamentally this is why prices are cheaper in the US – the economy is much larger and there are few planning constraints. For some reason the Government doesn't seem immediately inclined to either course of action.

Italian job

SWISS, SPANISH, French and now Italian banks are doing it – so why not British banks too? The urge to merge is sweeping the European banking sector, but since Lloyds tied the knot with TSB, British banks have proved largely resilient to the process. Will they not be forced to join the party?

Some of them would dearly like to, but actually there is no reason why the latest outbreak of merger mania on the Continent should prompt any response over here. This heightened period of merger activity may have parochial significance, but internationally, it is of little relevance.

The Italian banking scene – and to a lesser extent its counterparts

in France and Spain – is a highly fragmented one, with no bank having more than 8 per cent of the national market. Small in national terms, they are big in regional representation.

Each of the four parties involved in Italy's two proposed banking mergers have their own regional strongholds. As such, they are more akin to the coming together of a NatWest and Bank of Scotland, than a NatWest and Barclays.

Even after these mergers, there will be no single Italian bank which is bigger than Barclays or NatWest. So the idea that Continental banking mergers, which are in part a response to the free market reform being brought about by the introduction of the euro, could be a justification for consolidation in Britain too, doesn't really stack up.

In Britain, the Government remains as opposed to the idea of further banking consolidation as ever. Don Crucikshank has been instructed to conduct a wide-ranging investigation of banking on the Government's behalf, to establish whether the structure of the banking market short-changes the British economy, so the possibility of a public policy shift enabling

British banks to seek consolidating mergers seems remote.

So far, we've yet to see any significant cross-border merger activity, and that presumably has to be the next stage. Even with the birth of the euro, however, the cultural and structural obstacles to such mergers remain profound. British banks have been asked on a number of occasions what they might be able to do with Credit Lyonnais; unsurprisingly they have taken the view that this is a risk too. Any opportunity that is not, in effect, a rescue, would probably be closed to them.

None the less, someone will eventually take the plunge. Regrettably – or mercifully, depending on your point of view – the regulatory and management obstacles involved will probably mean that when such a transaction does take place, it won't involve a British bank.

Meanwhile, the question on everyone's lips – will Italy's new-found love of Anglo-Saxon takeovers lead to the final demise of Enrico Cuccia, at 83 still the acknowledged Don of Italian capitalism? Rumour has it that actually he's been dead for years. His influence was almost entirely absent from these mergers, so if time's

winged chariot hasn't already carried him off, business realities seem to have done the job instead.

Sterling supreme

IF THERE is one signal above all others that indicates the British economy is likely to enjoy a soft rather than a hard landing, it is the strength of the pound. Everyone knows that sterling has been gaining ground against the beleaguered euro. But in trade-weighted terms, too, it has been climbing for most of this year, and is fast heading back towards the levels that made exporters squeal with pain last spring and summer.

It is hard to see any relief on the horizon for British manufacturers. The latest GDP figures confirmed that the economy had more or less stalled by the final quarter of last year, and it is likely to remain in the doldrums for the first half of this year. Trade in goods and services is

turnaround from the mid-1990s. The new monetary and fiscal policy framework has won trust in the financial markets.

What's more, it is hard to think of anywhere else investors might want to put their money. Euroland is slowing, with GDP in Germany and Italy in outright decline. The Nikkei in Japan has come off the bottom quite dramatically since the start of the year, largely in response to foreign interest, but few would bet the Japanese economy is out of the mire yet. Much of the emerging world economy is in recession. There is the American juggernaut, of course, but many investors already hold more in US assets than they might think wise in other circumstances.

So the strength of the pound is half a signal of confidence in the British economy, half a thumbs down for much of the rest of the world.

Whatever the balance of explanations, neither points to any exchange rate weakening on the horizon. Nor is there a lot the authorities can do about it. The strong pound has to be seen as a badge of pride, no matter how unwelcome it is to some exporters.

Bank workers vote to create super-union

NEARLY 200,000 employees at the big retail banks have voted overwhelmingly to create the world's largest finance sector union, it was announced yesterday.

About 95 per cent of the members of three existing unions opted for a merger they believe will give them far more muscle in dealing with management.

As the poll results were revealed, the new organisation disclosed that nine out of 10 of its members at NatWest had rejected a 3 per cent pay offer and seven of 10 wanted to hold a ballot on industrial action.

The new super-union – made up of BIFU, UNIFI and the NatWest Staff Association – declared its intention to expand even further, initially targeting the Lloyds TSB Group Union that claims to have a membership of 20,000.

Set to be formally established on 13 May the new organisation will be called UNIFI, an amended version of the name of its constituents. The grouping hopes that part of its growth will come from recognition deals under the Employment Relations Bill scheduled to be enacted in the next 12 months.

BY BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

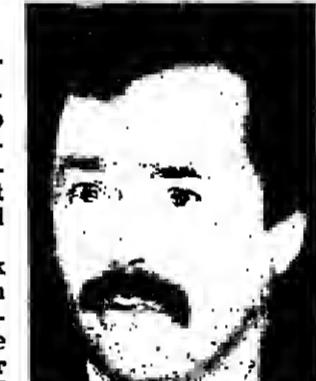
Ed Sweeney, general secretary of BIFU, who is expected to lead the new union after elections next year, said HSBC/Midland could be one of the first employers to be challenged under the new law.

Management at the bank withdrew union recognition rights from around 2,500 managers, many of whom have remained union members. Mr Sweeney believes that UNIFI will regain recognition automatically because the new union retains more than half the membership.

Welcoming the vote to create the new union, John Monks, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, said: "I can see this becoming one of the great TUC trade unions very soon."

Mr Sweeney said it was clear that staff in the finance industry "needed and wanted one voice". He said the amalgamation mirrored existing mergers between financial institutions and was established in the knowledge that there were more to come.

The new organisation was a



Sweeney of BIFU: 'Staff need and want one voice'

symbol of the fact that employees' representatives had forgotten the antagonisms between unions and staff associations, from which the only beneficiaries had been management.

Membership of the new grouping would stand at 193,000, but there was a total of 1.5 million employees in the sector, a million of whom were in in-house staff associations and all of whom were potential members, Mr Sweeney said.

Among the targets were medium-sized and small insti-

tutions in the city, foreign-owned banks, building societies and insurance companies.

Rory Murphy, general secretary of the NatWest association, announced that the Royal & SunAlliance staff association had decided to merge with his organisation and that talks were going ahead with other organisations. "Instead of beating the crap out of each other, we are now concentrating on management," said Mr Murphy.

Referring to a dispute at NatWest, he said the company had been making profits of £2bn, but were only prepared to offer up to 3 per cent to employees. "Some staff will get 3 per cent, others will get nothing," he said. His association would attempt to negotiate a better deal in the wake of the vote for a ballot on industrial action, he said.

In contrast Iain MacLean, assistant general secretary of UNIFI, said that an offer of 4 per cent at Barclays plus improvements in benefits was acceptable. "It shows it is possible to reach agreements with employers which benefit both the business and the employees," he said.

Profits plunge at Morgan Crucible

MORGAN CRUCIBLE, the international ceramics and carbon group, yesterday posted a 70 per cent plunge in headline profits to £32.2m after being battered by slumping demand and a string of one-off costs.

The group, which provides advanced materials for use in aerospace, transport and electronics, warned in January that profits would be hit by a strike at General Motors and cutbacks at Boeing – two of its biggest customers.

The group was also hit by the knock-on effects of the Asian crisis. US steelmakers, struggling to fight off cheap Asian imports, cut their orders.

In response Morgan is undergoing a big restructuring, which will see it shed a total of 1,200 jobs worldwide, up to 300 of them in the UK, to achieve savings of £21m a year. It is also disposing of all but a core of

BY ANDREW VERTIY

eight businesses, focusing on carbon and ceramics.

Yesterday Morgan said talks to sell its specialty chemicals business, by far the biggest chunk of its disposal programme, were nearing completion and named a figure of £174.3m. It also said it planned to buy back 15 per cent of its own shares this year.

Ian Norris, chief executive, said the changes would shrink the workforce from 15,500 to 13,600, while annual savings should be enough to return the group to growth.

After marking down by 30 per cent in January the City reacted mildly to the results. Profit on ordinary activities before exceptional fell only 19 per cent to £31.1m, at the top end of expectations. The shares fell 3p to close at 247p.

Shortage pushes up house prices

HOUSE PRICES showed strong signs of recovery in the three months to the end of February, fuelled by a shortage of properties on the market, according to a survey by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), writes Andrew Verti.

The survey showed 34 per cent of chartered surveyor-estate agents reported a rise in prices in their area, while only 7 per cent reported a fall. The figures are more optimistic than at any time since last summer.

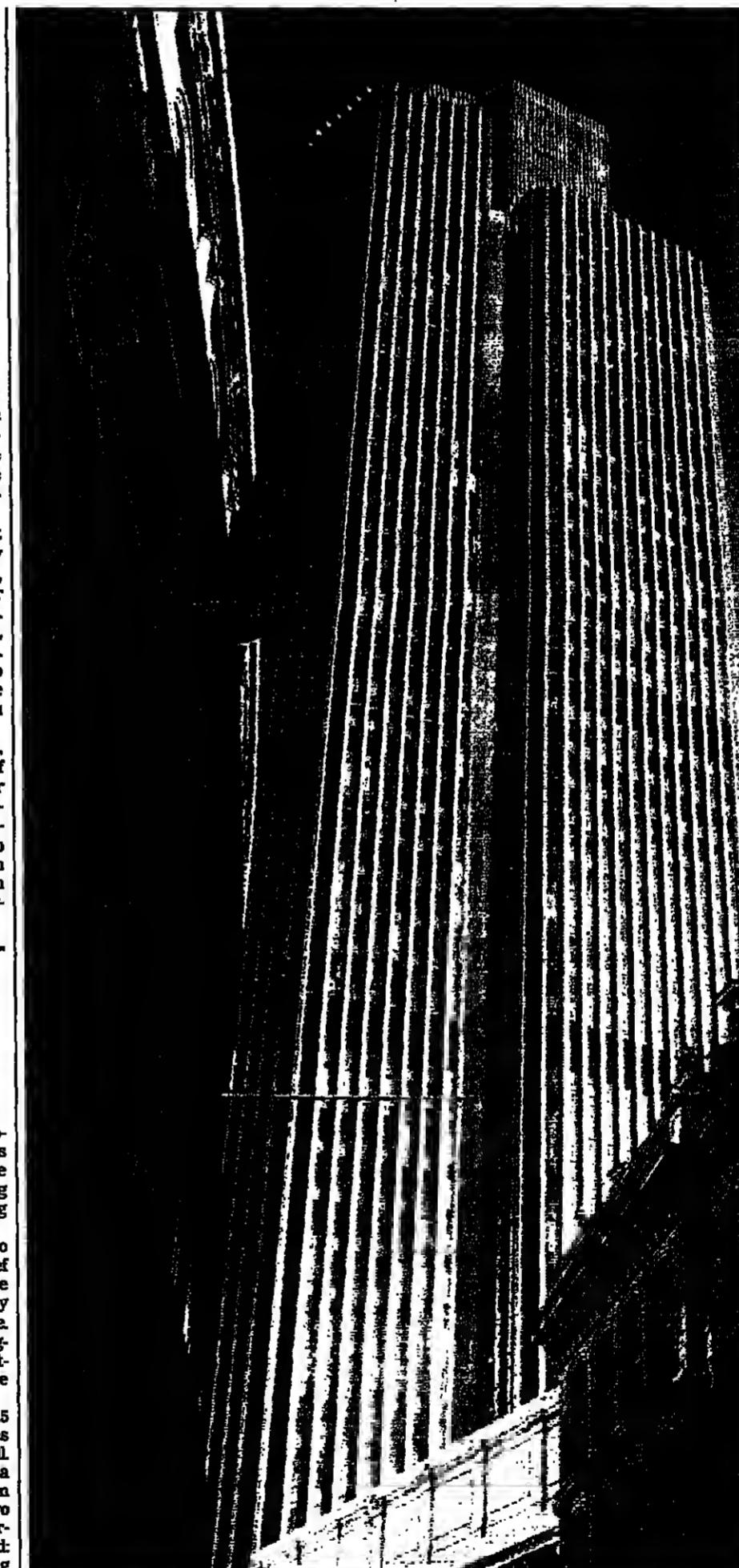
Confidence is strongest in London, where a balance of 45 per cent of surveyors reported price increases. As recently as December, the balance was 30 per cent reporting falling prices.

Spring is traditionally the strongest season for the housing market. But the institute said prospects for the market were brighter even after this was taken into account.

RICS said the renewed optimism is yet to reach regions such as the Midlands and the North, where manufacturing redundancies are knocking buyers' confidence.

Gordon Brown's decision to abolish mortgage interest relief next year will bite harder outside London because it applies only to the first £30,000 of a mortgage. The tax relief represents a larger chunk of the average mortgage outside London, where property values are lower.

But in London, an extra 0.5 per cent stamp duty on prices over £250,000 would take its toll. The stamp duty payable on a £250,000 house has now risen from £2,500 to £6,250 in two years. Ian Perry, housing market spokesman for RICS, said: "It may have some dampening effect at the top end of the housing market, particularly in London and South-east England."



The NatWest Tower in the City is co-owned by Greycourt, the subject of a £211m bid from Delancey Estates, a property group where George Soros holds 60 per cent.

Soros moves to buy the NatWest Tower

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

GEORGE SOROS, the financier whose bet against sterling rocked the City in 1992, yesterday moved to buy one of its most famous landmarks, the NatWest Tower, when one of his companies launched a £211m bid for the building's co-owner, Greycourt.

Delancey Estates – a property group where Mr Soros controls nearly 60 per cent of the shares – put an end to months of speculation by tabling a paper offer valuing each Greycourt share at around 195p.

The all-paper deal proposed by Delancey, where the chairman of British Land, John Rithiat, and his son James have a 30 per cent stake, was immediately rejected by the board of Greycourt, a specialist in central London office developments.

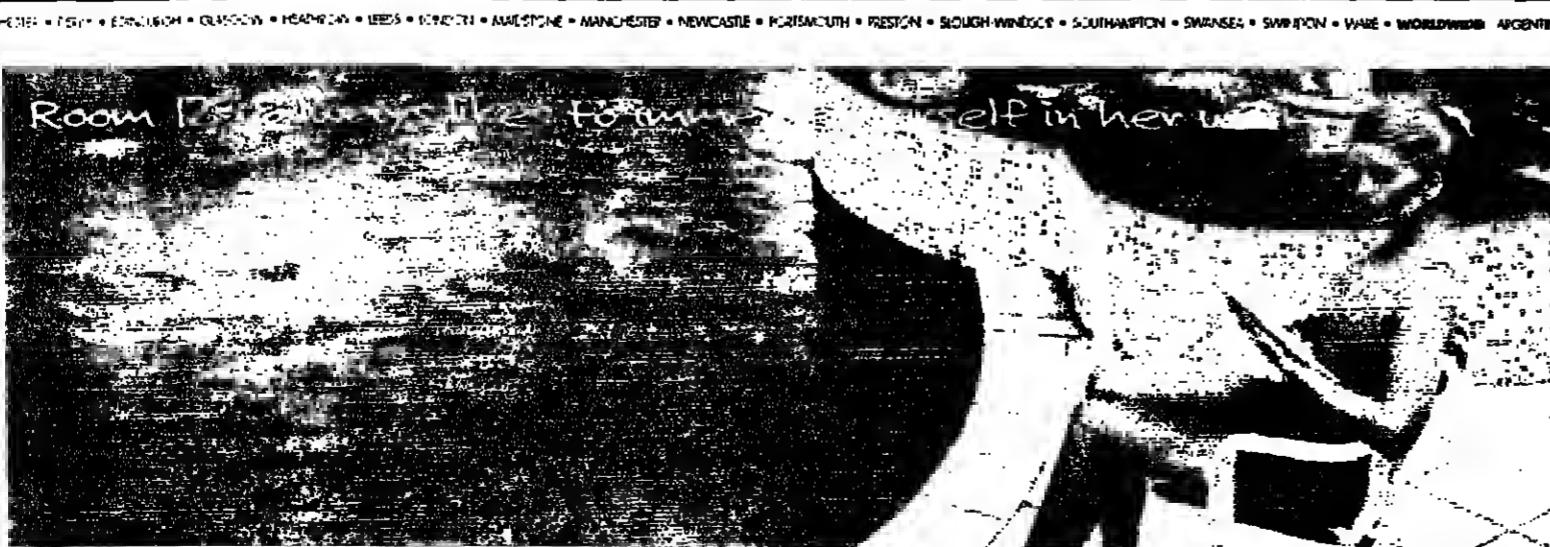
The Greycourt board slammed the offer by Delancey, which built up a stake of nearly 10 per cent over the past few months, as "desirous" and invited other bidders to enter the fray. The chief executive, Peter Thornton, said the company, which owns the NatWest Tower with Mercury Asset Management and Hermes, wanted to reward its long-suffering shareholders with a deal well above its net asset value of around 240p.

He hinted that the board was prepared to recommend an offer in cash or shares from a large property group such as British Land, Land Securities or Hammerson. The comments pushed Greycourt's share price up 31.5p to 200p. Delancey closed down 2.5p to 97.5p.

Mr Thornton revealed that he had planned to put the company up for sale after its final results in May in an attempt to end years of underperformance. However, he said the Delancey offer "significantly undervalues the company's assets and prospects".

The chief executive's view were backed by one of Greycourt's investors, who said that the Delancey proposition was "not compelling at all".

James Rithiat, the managing director of Delancey, pointed out that the offer was at a 50 per cent premium to Greycourt's price before his company bought its stake.



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Internet craze pushes Dixons to new high

DIXONS, the electrical retailer for long in the stock market doghouse, charged to yet another new high. The shares were at one time up 10p; they closed with a 71p gain to 1,419p. In July they touched 477p.

The stock market Internet craze has been a major influence in the group's performance. On Friday Schroder's, the investment house, published calculations which indicated Dixons shares were worth 2,000p.

It said the chain's fledgling Freeserve Internet access service could be worth 1,000p a share with the core retailing business in 970p.

The shares got the Internet bug when the success of the Freeserve link became apparent just at the time the market was beginning giddily to surf the World Wide Web.

Ahead of the Freeserve arrival, Dixons had recovered its cherished Footsie place and has since consolidated its position. Profits last year emerged at £218.7m. At the interim stage they were lower and progress throughout the

VPG, which hires production equipment to the television industry, is nearly doubling its size through a share issue. It plans to raise £10m by selling shares at around the current price, 52p up 4p.

More details, together with figures, are due on Monday. The group has made steady progress; profits last year were £900,000. Since arriving on the market two years ago the shares have been as high as 64p.

rest of the year is not expected to have been particularly exhilarating, with the market consensus around £23m.

Footsie ended a rather featureless session off 10.4 points at 6,152.8. At one time it was up 36.9. Around half the fall could be explained by shares going ex-dividend. Woolfied, Allied Domecq and Pearson were among those lowered to account for dividend payments.

The mid cap index was also off form but the small cap, helped by takeover bids and the growing realisation of the value lurking on the undercard, was firm, gaining 12.4 to 2,393.1.

Telecom shares firmed, with Telewest Communications leading the Footsie leader board with a 15.75p gain to 253.25p. Securicor, as stories resurfaced of BT taking full control of the Cellnet mobile phones group, rose 28.5p to 554p. It is suggested that Securicor is asking £3.6bn for its 40 per cent stake. BT rose 13p to 1,012p but Colt Telecom fell 23p to 971p.

Scottish Power was at one time 9.5p higher on expectations that its Scottish Telecom operation would soon be floated. But once it was realised any deal would not occur until towards the end of the year the appeal faded and the price ended 11.5p lower at 549.5p.

British Energy brightened

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

31p to 548.5p after Warburg Dillon Read and Merrill Lynch took a shine to the group.

Bass, the brewing and hotel group, failed to respond to Morgan Stanley enthusiasm. The shares fell 9p to 910.5p although the investment house raised its target price to 995p from 900p.

Rentokil initially hardened 10p to 385.5p on BT, Alex Brown support, and EMI fell 9p to 427.5p following meetings with analysts. Goldman Sachs told its clients that profits of the showbiz group could emerge at the lower end of market estimates. The securities house was said to be reviewing its own two-year estimates of 200m and 216m.

Takeover action on the market undercard underlined the belief that corporate activity remains strong. Much of the latest action came in two bombed out sectors - healthcare and property. Westminster Healthcare jumped 115p

to 300p as Canterbury Health care produced a 31p a share offer. Canterbury is the creation of Dr Chai Patel, the founder of the Court Cavendish healthcare group.

On the property pitch it was Greycourt at the centre of the action. The shares rose 31.5p to 200p as Delancey Estates, related to George Soros, mounted a hostile share exchange strike. It was quickly rejected. Delancey has 11 per cent of Greycourt, which has in the past attracted the attention, but so far no suggestion of corporate action, of Wales City of London Properties.

Chesterfield Properties, which has caught the predatory interest of Quintain Estates & Development, rose 31.5p to 4216.5p. At one time the shares were up 60p.

Hall Engineering held at 140p, although there were signs that TI, the conglomerate, may increase its 97p a share hostile offer. A rival bid is expected from Hall's management, led by chief executive John Sword.

SEAO VOLUME: 302.6 million
SEAO TRADES: 86,421
GILTS INDEX: 115.97 -0.13

Source: Datastream

Regent Inns is likely to be under the weather today. After the market closed the pub chain said its merger talks with SFL, which last week appeared to be going well, had been called off. The shares were little changed at 172.5p.

South Country Homes was suspended at 44.5p. It is buying a leisure company for £35m.

Ecocrop, the office equipment group, climbed 5.25p to 15.25p on reports of a venture capitalist bid from Italy.

Premier Oil firm 1.5p to 15.25p on takeover speculation.

Tim Eggar, the former Tory minister who heads Monument Oil & Gas, believes industry restructuring is "inevitable and desirable".

Monument shares shaded to 43.5p. The rest of the oil sector was little changed ahead of today's Opec meeting, which is not expected to have much impact on the market.

Iceland, the frozen food retailer, was in fine form, gaining 25p to 275p. Figures are due today. About £55m is expected against £45.5m. SG Securities rates the shares a buy.

COX INSURANCE enjoyed a late flurry, but it was not strong enough to prevent the shares falling 2.5p to 146p.

Towards the close a number of deals went through at 150p, with one trade booked at 152p.

Cox has had a dismal time, with the shares tumbling from 520p. They have been down to 132p.

The day's volume, with turnover put at 172,000 shares, was more than the group usually attracts.

Scotia firmed 11p to 160.5p after the US Food and Drug Administration awarded "fast track" status to its Foscan cancer drug. Proteus International rose a further 4.5p to 49.5p following investment meetings. However Nomura International cut its stake to 8.9 per cent, selling 137,000 shares.

Victoria, a carpets group planning a £5m property sale, piled on 10p to 90p. The company is capitalised at around 56.6m.

Theo Fennell paid the price for a late Friday evening profit warning, tumbling 8p to 24.5p. Reports of boardroom resignations at Corporate Services, already devastated by a profit warning, pushed the shares down to 73.5p, off 1p.

Some of the smaller mining shares came to life. Anglesey Mining rose 1p to 4.5p and Enerex International added 1.25p to 10p after its zinc prospect in Kazakhstan was said to have a capacity of 100,000 tonnes a year. Developing the mine and zinc refinery would cost around £170m.

Business directory group Scoot.com rose 4.25p to 29.5p following its link with Energis, down 15p at 1,630p.

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Only the intrepid to follow Captain

BY GREG WOOD

IT SEEKS almost indecent, just five days after the Gold Cup, that it is already time to consider a race which will take barely two minutes to run and in which, unless something goes very badly wrong, your money will not leave the ground even once. But there it is, the Lincoln Handicap, trying as usual to grab a little attention between Cheltenham and the Grand National meeting, and no doubt luring punters in for a bet which they will spend the rest of the Flat season chasing.

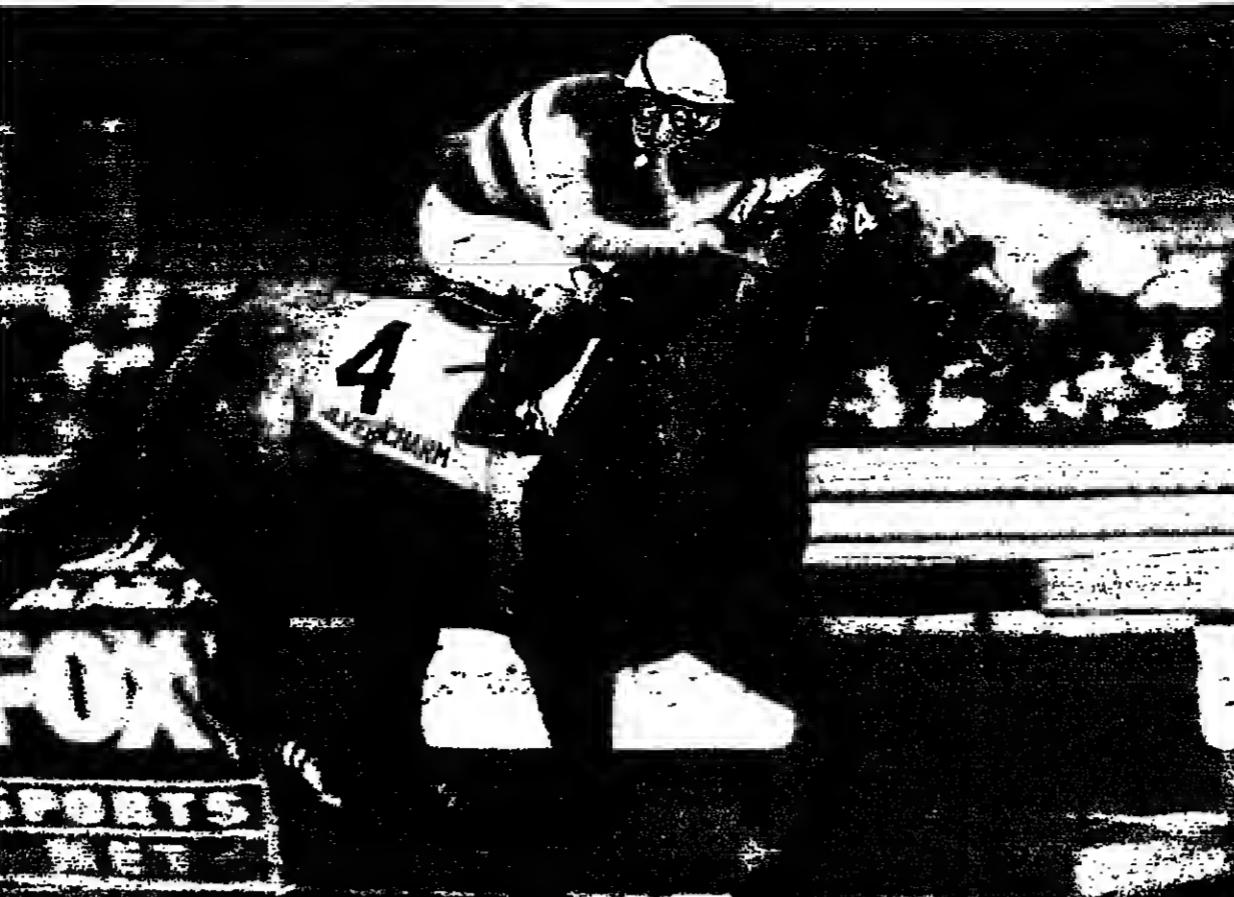
The Lincoln, to put it mildly, is not much of a race for favourites, which is only to be expected when many of the runners have not seen a race-course for at least four months. This year, though, backers who put their faith in the likely market leader will at least have one of the country's finest trainers of handicappers on their side. Jeremy Glover has won three Cambridgeshires in the last 10 years, and in Captain Scott, he seems to have a Lincoln runner with every chance that any punter could wish for.

There is good recent form, in the valuable Lincoln Trial Handicap at Wolverhampton 10 days ago, which Captain Scott won by two lengths. Glover's runner also prefers

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Master Rastus
(Uttoxeter 3.50)
NB: Norlandic
(Exeter 3.00)

was going away. A dead straight mile will be an advantage to him, because they've got to hit it well."

The run on the all-weather was Captain Scott's first outing since July 1998, when he was sixth in the John Smith's (Magnet) Cup at York. "We were looking at the Magnet Cup and then the Cambridgeshire, but it didn't work out because he



Silver Charm wins at Santa Anita last month on his way to Sunday's Dubai World Cup

Saxon Reed/AP

much shorter odds.

At least he is guaranteed a race on Saturday, since he was among the top 24 in the weights when 55 horses were declared yesterday. The final declaration stage also takes place on Thursday, both to facilitate the draw, and to allow another 24 horses to contest the Spring Mile consolation race on Friday afternoon.

Right Wing, who finished third last year, is also guaranteed a place, but Further Outlook, another leading figure in the ante-post market, needs two to scratch between now and Thursday morning to get in.

David Nicholson, Further Outlook's trainer, who also

saddles Royal Result,

said yesterday: "Both horses are well. We've done as much as we can with them despite the wet weather which held us in turns to choose a box."

"It's certainly prefer to see

Further Outlook get into the Lincoln rather than go in the other race [the Spring Mile] with 55 horses."

News yesterday on the second leg of the Spring Double, the Grand National, concerned Call It A Day, who finished second to Young Kenny in the Midlands National at Uttoxeter on Saturday. "We were very pleased with him, he ran a smashing race," David Nicholson, his trainer, said. "He's come out of the race and is on course for the National."

Odds of 2-1 are the best on offer against Bob Baffert's charge who will face four members of the Godolphin squad, including Central Park who was backed yesterday from 40-1 to 21 with William Hill.

■ Cheltenham Gold Cup flop Dorus Pride may run on the Flat at the Curragh this weekend as preparation for next month's Heimbecker Gold Cup at

Pimchestown.

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Dashmore (28) has won 10 of his 12 starts, including the 2000-01 Grand National, and is the 1-500 chance to win the Gold Cup.

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Graham sees hard road ahead

BY NICK HARRIS

WHEN GEORGE GRAHAM was unveiled as Christian Gross's successor at Tottenham last October, his ambition appeared modest. "The aim is to be in the top six within two years," he said at the time. Less than six months later the White Hart Lane trophy cabinet has been furnished with its first piece of silverware since the FA Cup in 1991 but Graham still admits that his building process has barely started.

"Of course I want it [Sunday's Worthington Cup win over Leicester] to be a stepping stone but the way the game is going it is now very difficult to assemble a squad of players capable of taking on the teams at the top," Graham said. "Next year it's going to be even harder for the top teams. With up to 17 games in Europe, 38 in the premier league, two cups, you need a massive squad."

Finding money to spend should not prove a problem for a man who is renowned for being astute on the transfer market. So far, he has spent only £6.5m (on Tim Sherwood from Blackburn and Mauricio Taricco from Ipswich Town).

In addition, Sunday's win is likely to make Spurs' chairman, Alan Sugar, feel that securing Graham's services for four years (at a reported cost of £6m) was a good piece of business, and that any further investment will reap dividends.

David Ginola, man-marked out of the match against Leicester, said that new players were now a priority for next season's European campaign.

"I remember at the beginning of the season we tried to sign Patrick Kluivert and players like that, but they were not interested because Tottenham were not involved in any European competition," Ginola said.

"We have a structure in place to be a great team and it is up to the chairman to make the right choice – sometimes you have to think about taking your money out of your pocket. Nothing is impossible. We have to carry on working and we have to be stronger."

When Graham took over from Don Howe at Arsenal in March 1996, he brought in Alan Smith from Leicester and



The vest is yet to come: David Ginola celebrates Sunday's Worthington Cup victory with the fans. To their disappointment, they did not get the shirt ... or the vest. Reuters

placed faith in a pair of youngsters, Paul Merson and Tony Adams. His first trophy (as with Spurs) was the League Cup – a 2-1 victory over Liverpool – a year later.

The end of Graham's first full season as the manager at Highbury saw the Gunners finish fourth in the table, and two years later they took the title, a feat repeated in 1991. They won the FA Cup and League Cup double in 1993 and the European Cup-Winners' Cup in 1994.

At Leeds, Graham took the helm in September 1996 on a manifesto of "total commitment, hard work and passion" and installed David O'Leary as his assistant. "I will be working with the defence first," Graham said, not surprisingly given the "1-0 to the Arsenal" reputation he had acquired at Highbury.

"I don't think it would be right to dash off into the transfer market straight away," he said at the time, and Spurs supporters will be heartened to recall that the

transformation Graham made was successful. Nigel Martyn gained confidence in goal, Lucas Radebe's marking talents were nurtured and Graham delved into the transfer market to buy Gunnar Halle and Robert Molenaar for £400,000 and £1.1m respectively.

The results may not have been pretty, but the side was solidly built from the back and lay the foundations on which O'Leary is now successfully building on at Elland Road.

"I enjoy doing it and if I keep doing it right it doesn't worry me what the fans, the players and even the club think about me," Graham said after Sunday's win, and his new charges appear to agree with him, despite his reputation as being a cold manager not in the habit of praising his players.

Ian Walker, drafted into Kevin Keegan's England squad for Saturday's Euro 2000 match against Poland, said yesterday that it was his new manager's

will to win that had rubbed off on the players. "What's changed under him? Everything really – the attitude of the players, the strength of the team. We're working a lot more for each other."

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Sunday's goalscorer, Allan Nielsen, added: "Before he came there was self-belief with individuals but not as a team. Hopefully this is just the start."

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Hay injury hampers Leeds

ANDY HAY is out of Leeds' Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final against Bradford on Sunday. The in-form second-rower broke a hand in the defeat by Wigan on Friday night and will be on the sidelines for three or four weeks.

The news is a blow to Leeds' preparations, but their coach, Graham Murray, hopes that his other casualties will be fit for the match at Huddersfield. Adrian Morley, Anthony Farrell, Richie Blackmore, Brad Godden and Marcus St Hilaire are all fighting for fitness. "I am hopeful that they will all be fit and I will be giving them as long as possible before finalising the team," Murray said.

RUGBY LEAGUE
BY DAVE HADFIELD

The other semi-finalists have their own injury problems, with knee injury victim Danny Orr regarded as doubtful for Castleford's side to meet London on Saturday.

"We're hoping he can come through," said his coach, Stuart Raper. "We will give him until Friday and keep our fingers crossed."

Raper is more confident that Dean Sampson and his brother, Aaron Raper, will be available after also picking up injuries in the match at Warrington.

London's prop, Grant Young, had an operation yesterday to pin the leg fracture that will rule him out for the season, while another front-rower, Darren Bradstreet, is to have a shoulder reconstruction this week. Bradstreet was also thought to be out for the season, but said yesterday: "The surgeon has told me that I could be back with six weeks of matches to play."

That still leaves the Broncos desperately short of props in the medium term but a move for Phil Adamson, who appears to be on the fringes at St Helens, is not likely to be followed up. The former Penrith prop cannot get into Saints' team, but London have been

put off by the size of his contract at Knowsley Road.

Andy Gregory has again pulled back from the brink after threatening to resign as coach of Salford. Gregory, the longest-serving coach in the British game, said he was considering his future after Salford's defeat at Wakefield on Sunday. "I said at Wakefield on Sunday, 'I said that I did because I care about the club,'" he said yesterday. "I was totally, totally dismayed, but a lot of the lads have asked me not to leave, along with the coaching staff. All I want now is to put a team out that takes two points of Warrington in the next game. That can't come soon enough for me."

The game's governing body,

the Rugby Football League, has rebranded itself in a way that emphasises its custodianship of the code. It has launched a new logo, along with a slogan, "Love this Game," that echoes the National Rugby League's "I love my footy," with which it has tried to win back hearts and minds in Australia.

"It seeks to unite everyone who loves rugby league, in whatever way, in whatever part of the country, however the game is played," said the RFL's chief executive, Neil Tunnicliffe, of the campaign.

The former Halifax coach and Australian Test winger, Chris Anderson, has become



Brand loyalty: League's new logo, launched yesterday

his country's new coach. Anderson, who has been in charge of the Melbourne Storm's successful entry into the NRL, takes over from Wayne Bennett, who resigned because of the Brisbane Broncos' bad start to the season after just two Tests. Others, such as Phil Gould and

the former Hull and Bradford coach, Brian Smith, ruled themselves out of consideration, but Anderson said: "After 30 years in the game, coaching Australia is the highest honour I could have."

"I can't understand why people wouldn't want it."

McRae sets a strong pace

RALLYING

COLIN McRAE's remorseless pace-setting locked him on course for a second successive rally victory as he opened up a big advantage in Portugal yesterday. McRae proved his Safari Rally triumph in the new Ford Focus was no fluke as he won four of the eight special stages.

He ended the second day leading Richard Burns by just over 45 seconds as Britain enjoyed another successful campaign on the Iberian peninsula. McRae's advantage is all the more incredible, given that he won the event last year for Subaru by just 2.1 seconds.

The Scot did most of the damage early on as he quickly built on his overnight lead of 0.4 seconds from the short superstage before ending the day with another best time.

McRae defied his own fears and those of his Welsh co-driver Nicky Grist that the Focus was still too heavy to challenge for a victory as he powered over the terrain in northern Portugal. He sent the thousands of fans by the side of the gravel roads scurrying away to escape the dust blown up in his wake.

McRae, 10 points behind the world champion Tommi Mäkinen in the standings, knows Burns is likely to be his biggest threat given the Subaru always performs well in Portugal.

Burns needs a podium finish to boost his own title hopes having scored just two points in the previous three rallies this season. The 28-year-old from Oxford grabbed back second place on the final stage from Sainz but is less than a second ahead of the Spaniard. Burns had leaped from 12th to second on the opening stage of the day and was always thereabouts, setting one fastest stage time as well as a joint best with McRae.

Sainz is just ahead of his Toyota team-mate Didier Auriol with Marcus Gronholm fifth for Mitsubishi. Mäkinen is ninth after transmission problems.

TODAY'S NUMBER

69

The shot (in miles per hour) that won Dundee United's Scott McCullough the title of fastest shot in the Scottish Premier League. It was measured on police traffic equipment.

Britain become top dogs in Cup



Patty Schnyder of Switzerland, plays a backhand recovery shot in her 6-3, 6-3 third-round defeat of Croatia's Mirjana Lucic yesterday AFP

BRITAIN ARE developing into top dogs against the United States for the Davis Cup tie in Birmingham on the Easter weekend at such a rapid rate that it is starting to become slightly ominous for the home side. Yesterday Tom Gullikson, the United States captain, even pleaded with the American media to give wholehearted support to his team. So much for the gung-ho spirit.

Gullikson's rallying call was made under clear blue skies on the porch of the art deco Cleveland restaurant on Ocean Drive, South Beach, Miami. Last month a customer was murdered at the Cleveland, which is down the road from where Gianni Versace drank his last coffee.

The Stars and Stripes and Union Jack were draped side by side on the Cleveland's terrace, in front of a table adorned by a miniature of Dwight Davis's silver punch-bowl. Franklin D Roosevelt was in his first term in the White House last time Britain defeated America in the competition, Fred Perry leading a 5-0 whitewash in the Challenge Round at Wimbledon in 1935. But Gullikson was taking no chances, especially since Pete Sampras had started a chorus of "Americans don't care about Davis Cup" when declaring priority.

After confirming that Jan-Michael Gambill, he of the matinée idol looks, and Alex O'Brien, a doubles specialist, had been selected for his squad along with the seasoned Jim Courier and Todd Martin, Gullikson said: "My closing comments are for the American media. I'd really like everybody to really get behind the team in this tie. Be really positive. That would be a great thing for you to do." His words prompted a round of applause.

Gullikson was asked how the squad's morale was standing up, given the controversy over Sampras and Agassi, plus the revelation that the team's doctor George Farred, had lost his job. "I think sometimes controversy can act as a positive," the captain said. "It can make you stronger, increase your resolve. Jim-Michael and Alex are committed to the Davis Cup. Everybody has their own reasons for playing or not being available to play. I think playing for your country should always be your highest priority."

Adopting a light-hearted approach, Gullikson said: "The other day I was having a coffee with Tim Henman and I was trying to talk him into playing the tie here at the Lipton site, because the weather is great and the food is great here. But he didn't buy into it."

Turning towards Gambill and O'Brien, Gullikson said: "We just happened to have caught a couple of stragglers walking down South Beach." He added that both players were asked if they had taken McEnroe seriously as a contender. "Not really," he said.

As for playing in Birmingham,

Gullikson said the squad would be setting off next Saturday evening, and would be landing "somewhere in England". He was not sure if there were flights to Birmingham. It was not sure if there were flights to Birmingham.

Statistics favour the Americans, with the head-to-head record against the combined force of the opposition giving them a 13-2 advantage. Martin leads Henman 3-1 and Greg Rusedski 4-1; Gambill leads Henman 2-0, but has yet to play Rusedski; Courier leads Henman 1-0 and leads Rusedski 3-0.

The one lingering doubt for Gullikson concerns Martin's

fitness. Having been troubled by a strained stomach muscle since the Australian Open in January, the tall serve-volleyer decided to give the Lipton Championships here a miss in order to rest for Birmingham. "Todd's doing quite well," Gullikson said. "He's had a good week of working out his problems."

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Britons slip up in qualifiers

ICE SKATING

BRITAIN MADE a poor start on the opening day of the World Figure Skating Championships in Helsinki with both Clive Shorten and Neil Wilson failing to qualify for the second and third stages of the men's competition.

Shorten was too disappointed to talk but Sorelle Kayne, the British team manager, said the 25-year-old from London was "shattered" by his poor performance which earned him marks of 3.8-3.8 for technical merit and 4.2-4.9 for presentation.

Wilson, a 20-year-old from Northern Ireland, gained marks of 3.6-4.8 for technical merit and 3.8-5.1 for presentation but was more philosophical about his failure. "I'm quite pleased about the way I skated," he said. "I started a little tentatively but then eased up. I'm just glad to be here after a full year off ice with injuries."

Elsewhere in the competition, Russia led the way as expected, with Yevgeny Plushenko winning one qualifying group and the defending world champion, Alexei Yagudin, winning the other. Michael Weiss, the American champion, came in second to Plushenko and the former Olympic champion, Alexei Urmanov, was second to Yagudin.

A record-breaking day saw six skaters complete the four-revolution jump, the most ever in a competition.

BASKETBALL

MIAMI 95 Boston 92 (ot); LA Clippers 100 Portland 85; Chicago 88; New Jersey 85; Charlotte 75; LA Lakers 70; Orlando 104

ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

W EASTERN CONFERENCE

WESTERN CONFERENCE

NEW YORK DIVISION

SPORT

NEW FACES STAKE RYDER CLAIMS P21 • WINNING BOWL FOR GOUGH P23

Numbers problem for Keegan

KEVIN KEEGAN quickly discovered the realities of his new job yesterday, when he finally stepped on to a training ground as the England coach to find he had only eight players from an original 24-man squad to work with. The rest were either injured or resting.

This left his main work as pastoral and medical. First he soothed, for the time being at least, the festering row between Graeme Le Saux and Robbie Fowler. Then, in an ironic twist, he saw Le Saux's former *bête noire*, David Batty, and his current rival for an England place, Andy Hinchcliffe, return to Yorkshire with injury.

Batty's absence, caused by a virus which has set back his attempts to regain match-fit after a rib injury, is a particular blow. In the absence of the suspended Paul Ince it appeared the Leeds midfielder would have started Saturday's European Championship qualifier against Poland.

Keegan may now be forced to give Tim Sherwood a debut at Wembley in the anchor role.

With 37 caps, Batty had been one of the most experienced players in the squad.

FOOTBALL
By GLENN MOORE

Keegan was also faced with a minor goalkeeping crisis after both David Seaman and Nigel Martyn reported with knocks following their weekend matches. Although both are expected to be fit by Saturday, Keegan did not want to risk either in training until they had recovered. Having already called up Ian Walker, the Tottenham goalkeeper, he has also promoted Paul Robinson from the Under-21s to provide further cover. There is no prospect of Robinson, Martyn's understudy at Leeds, being involved in the senior game at the weekend, however. Should Keegan need further reinforcements?

The departure of Hinchcliffe, who has a back problem, increased the importance of Keegan's diplomatic overture to Le Saux and Fowler, who fell out

at Stamford Bridge last month when Le Saux reacted violently to Fowler's allegedly homophobic taunts.

The pair are understood to have kissed and made up (though not literally, a many shake of hands was the preferred option) as soon as they met at the team's Buckinghamshire hotel on Sunday night. Keegan then held a 20-minute meeting with them.

The Football Association described this as "a clear-the-air meeting" in which "both made it clear there was no personal animosity and that they were happy to continue as international team-mates."

Keegan said: "I'm delighted Graeme and Robbie were able to shake hands even before I asked them to come to my room. It's very important for them to be able to do so in private rather than publicly.

"I'm satisfied that in no way will our preparation for such an important game be disrupted either as a team, or with them as individuals, by what may have happened in the past.

That's all that matters. As far as I'm concerned the issue is over and done with."

This is not the case as far as the FA is concerned, as there is still a misconduct charge hanging over both players. With

that in mind, neither player felt able to comment "on legal advice", which suggests all is not as hunky-dory as Keegan would hope. Nor was there a public handshake for the media. The players were said to have felt that it would appear "contrived".

It is understood they will not be sharing a room but they may well be on the same side when Keegan holds his first full training session at Bisham Abbey this morning. The press are invited and any further confrontation between the pair would be "unhelpful".

More serious interest will revolve around Keegan's plans for central midfield. Aside from

Sherwood he could ask Paul Scholes to curb his attacking instincts and fill the holding role or move Gareth Southgate into midfield. Beckham, Darren Anderton and Jamie Redknapp are contenders for play-making responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the England Under-21 side's hopes of qualifying for the European Championship finals have suffered a setback with the withdrawal of the Leicester striker Emile Heskey. Capped 15 times, Heskey has been forced to pull out of the squad for Friday's group match with Poland at The Dell with a recurrence of a back problem.

Ireland trip still in doubt

THE REPUBLIC of Ireland should find out today whether Saturday's European Championship qualifier in Macedonia will take place. The game, scheduled to be held in Skopje, is in doubt because of the possibility of NATO air strikes in the area.

Uefa, the governing body of European football, could decide to hold the match at a neutral venue or move it to late April. Yugoslavia's match with Croatia in Belgrade is also in doubt.

The Irish squad are due to fly to Macedonia on Thursday, and a Football Association of Ireland spokesman said: "We have got to be assured that everything will be safe."

The Republic's manager, Mick McCarthy, said he was preparing his team in the expectation that the game would go ahead. "What's happening in Kosovo is very sad but until somebody in authority tells us to the contrary, we must assume that the match is on," he said.

The Republic's match in Yugoslavia, scheduled for last October, was postponed at the time because NATO countries were considering military action.

Uefa should also reveal today its decision over Wales' request to play Denmark in June in Cardiff, not Liverpool. Uefa has already denied one Welsh attempt to move the fixture, after the Danes expressed their wish for the game to be played at Anfield.

The Wales manager, Bobby

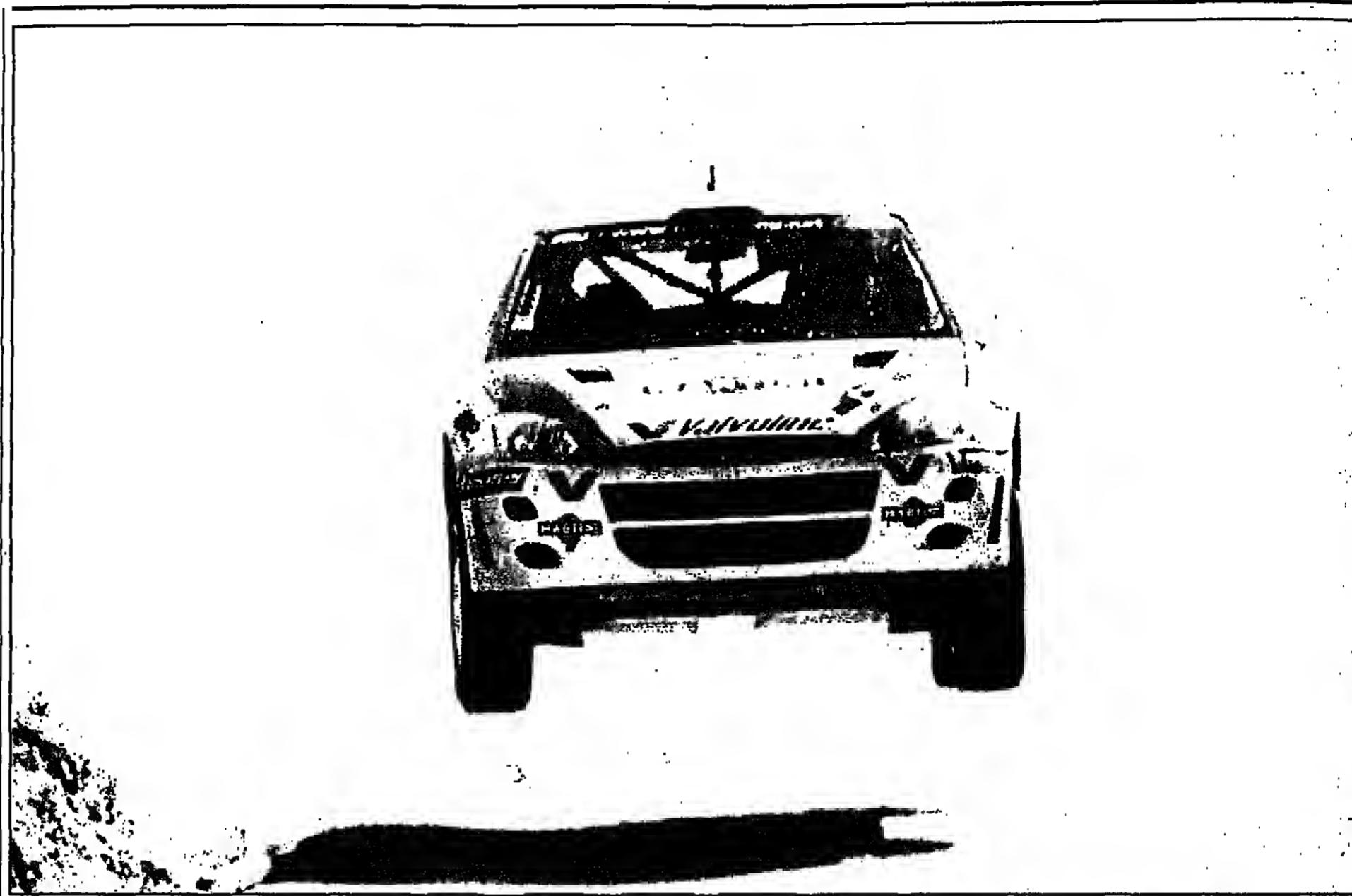
Gould, flew to Geneva yesterday with a delegation from the Football Association of Wales to plead his case. But of more pressing concern for Gould is an injury setback which could rob him of Ryan Giggs against Switzerland next week.

Giggs was missing from the Manchester United line-up against Everton on Sunday because of a hamstring problem, although his club manager, Alex Ferguson, said that he would still join up with his international team-mates on Thursday and a decision would be left to the Football Association of Wales' medical experts.

"Alex has said that Ryan can join us, and that is what will happen," confirmed Gould. "We will have a good look at him on Thursday and take it from there. At the moment I'm concentrating on the Uefa meeting into our appeal to switch the Denmark game to Cardiff. I will start turning my attention to Ryan Giggs when we get back on Tuesday evening."

It is likely Wales that will not be eager to clear up any doubts over Giggs' fitness in order to leave the Swiss guessing until the last moment. But Gould said: "I think the Swiss have more to worry about at the moment with their game in Belarus on Saturday to start thinking whether Ryan Giggs will be facing them in Zurich on Wednesday week."

More football, page 24



Colin McRae flies into the lead in his Ford Focus WRC during the first leg, fourth stage, of the Portuguese Rally yesterday in Fafe, northern Portugal

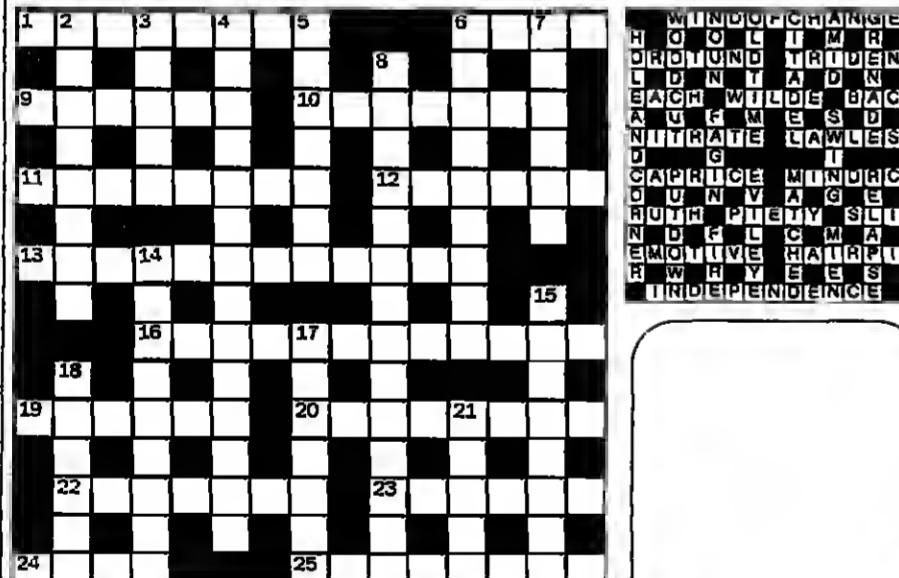
AP

THE TUESDAY CROSSWORD

No.3877 Tuesday 23 March

by Aledred

Monday's Solution



ACROSS

- Expected to keep further account for police vehicle (5,3)
- Criminal grabbing one's money (4)
- Squeeze glass of beer from container (3,3)
- Graduate, reportedly one doing without the cane (7)
- Shun changes in Irish place for US chaff (6)
- I stay with Frenchman in the same place (6)
- Pension of very good woman you finally took in (12)
- Upset rep, his tables must be set up before-hand (5,9)
- One with snooty person rejected a small tree (6)
- His gripe - poor playing? (8)
- Nourishing constituent of fog? (3,4)
- Willing to participate with team able to go on playing (6)
- Even living here could be boring (4)
- Delight? Then you might have to do this (8)
- Kind of watch or equivalent item (8)
- Woman splits racket in French city (5)
- Simple roofing material useless for pressing clothes? (10,4)
- Mink are cooked in dish (7)
- Dried insects could be

DOWN

- Wind of change (9)
- Woman is a victim of murder (6)
- No trouble except for the night shift? (3,2,1,4,4)
- Move in French car carrying name that's German (2,7)
- Plant has unusual old shape (8)
- It could get mud off filthy cars for one (7)
- Leave before time is cut? It's true (6)
- One animal disease found by new playwright (5)

Bracken in the wars again

RUGBY UNION

By CHRIS HEWITT

Given his natural fitness - Healey is among the quickest and most resilient players in the national squad - and his unusual versatility in covering both the scrum-half and wing positions, it is not outrageous to suggest that Woodward will consider awarding him an instant recall.

The most interesting involves Austin Healey, the "Leicester Lip", who is serving an eight-week suspension for trampling on the face of London Irish's Kevin Putt during an All-Dublin Premiership match last month. As Healey himself reminded Clive Woodward, the England coach, on Saturday night, he is free to play again on 10 April.

Healey is a victim of murder (6)

No trouble except for the night shift? (3,2,1,4,4)

Move in French car carrying name that's German (2,7)

Plant has unusual old shape (8)

It could get mud off filthy cars for one (7)

Leave before time is cut? It's true (6)

One animal disease found by new playwright (5)

but the casualty list resulting from Saturday's set-to with the Tricolores might almost have been designed to hasten Healey's return to the bench.

Bracken will be bitterly disappointed; considered by most good judges to be the most complete scrum-half in Europe, he appeared to have established himself as Woodward's preferred choice in the wars - indeed, his 27-year-old half-back has been constantly in the wars - indeed, his 1995 World Cup campaign was effectively ruined by a serious back condition.

Meanwhile, Brian Ashton, the former Bath and Ireland coach, has named a 26-man - or rather, a 26-teenager - party for the IRB/FIRA World Junior Championship, which begins in Wales this Friday. It is a clear sign of the professional times that only seven players have yet to re-open the debate in the minds of the national selectors.

From his very earliest moments on the international wing, Tony Underwood, to dig him out of trouble at No 14,

physical front. He made his debut against the All Blacks in 1983 when Jamie Joseph, the uncompromising Otago flanker, politely welcomed the newcomer to the big time by stamping on his ankle as he flicked the ball away from the first line-out and effectively cost him half a season's rugby. Since then, the 27-year-old half-back has been constantly in the wars - indeed, his 1995 World Cup campaign was effectively ruined by a serious back condition.

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From his very earliest moments on the international wing, Tony Underwood, to dig him out of trouble at No 14, proper that the two Allied Dumbar pacesetters for so much of the season, Leicester and Northampton, should each have three representatives.

The Tigers contribute the centre, Phil Christophers, and the scrum-half, James Grindel, along with their best-known teenage prospect, the outside-half Andrew Goode, who has already played first-team rugby at Welford Road. Also among the more recognisable names is Bath's Toki Adebayo, the younger brother of the former Test wing Adedapo Adebayo, who last played for England in last season's Calcutta Cup match at Murrayfield.

England's first game is against the hosts, Wales, at Neath on Friday night. The tournament, featuring teams from a remarkable 42 nations, ends on Sunday 4 April.

Yankee Stadium favoured for rematch

BOXING

a controversial draw at Madison Square Garden, New York. Lennox Lewis's world heavyweight title rematch with Evander Holyfield following promoter Don King's announcement that a return unification fight will take place in the autumn.

Holyfield has agreed to the fight, Lewis's manager, Frank Maloney, confirmed last night. It will take place in September or October.

King is keen on the Yankee Stadium because it could at least double the gate receipts of the first fight, which ended in

every record in boxing history. The [previous] result was a travesty but in another way it's made everybody in the world aware of boxing."

Meanwhile, the British-based World Boxing Union yesterday revealed that it had sacked the judge Eugenie Williams a year before she adjudicated in the Holyfield v Lewis fight. Williams, the Independent Boxing Federation's nominee from New Jersey, was the only one of the three judges to score the fight in Holyfield's favour.

Now Jon Robinson, presi-

dent of the WBU organisation in Norfolk, has revealed that Williams was removed from his judges' panel for being a "loner" last spring. But he stressed that the WBU had no problems with Williams' scoring and confirmed that on the last two occasions she worked for the body she was in accord with her two colleagues.

The WBU has also announced a new scoring system, designed to avoid similar controversies. It involves awarding 20 points to the winner and between 19 and 16 to the loser of each round.



Williams: Sacked by WBU

THE INDEPENDENT

TUESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



'Tis true, 'tis pity,
and pity 'tis, 'tis true

'Tis total tosh

Yes, yes, it's nice for everybody - nice for the British film industry, nice for the investors, nice for Dame Judi, nice for Marc, nice for Sir Tom, nice for Gwyneth (though maybe not so nice for all those genuinely British Vintas who might have been up for the part had someone not been thinking Oscars from the very beginning) but still, yes, yes, nice. And God knows the last thing one wants to do is spoil a good party. But *Shakespeare in Love*, Best Film, in any company, in any year, judged by any standards - my masters, are you mad?

Let me be blunt, so that we need not waste time on preliminaries. The film is tosh. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true - the film is tosh. Literate tosh, I grant you, but that somehow makes it worse. All those fine words and grand cadences - almost all of them Shakespeare's - thrown away on such piffing matter. All that erudition and understanding - almost all of it Shakespeare's - serving that single joke most calculated to please the plainest and most uninformed minds: the anachronism gag. You think wink-wink shots of souvenirs of Stratford are funny? You think an Elizabethan bargeman telling Shakespeare that he had that Christopher Marlowe in the back of the boat is funny? Best film funny? Then you are wrong.

Before a muddle from that same Christopher Mar-

low and a decisive glimpse of Gwyneth's boyish bared nipples, Shakespeare was intending to call his new play *Ethel the Pirate's Daughter*. That strike you as funny? Plangent in some way? Trenchant? Allusive to some telling silliness in the Elizabethan imagination? Wrong again.

I watched the film in the company of somebody who is, as the saying goes, "in the industry". He was alive to all the jokes about producers and money-men. In making a film about putting on a play, the makers of *Shakespeare in Love* were really making a film about putting on a film. I begrudge no man the pleasure of an in-joke. Didn't I, along with everyone else with a degree in English Literature, laugh at visual references to the ghoulish apprenticeship of John Webster? I did. But in the end an in-joke is a species of fattery. And he does me double wrong, that wounds me with the flattery of his tongue.

I am not going to contest the comedy. That Monty Python did it better 25 years will go without saying to anyone who was alive long ago. That *The Fust Show* does it better now also seems to me unanswerable. So it was smart of the casting director to use members of *The Fust Show* in the film. For there is an inevitable Carry On factor at work. Put in comic actors from a funny television show and they will get laughs willy-nilly. That's the dangerous downside of laughter: it is Pavlovian. But it is not because Shakespeare in Love wishes us to laugh at what makes it no more than a failure, something which,

in other circumstances, might just have been a success. *Shakespeare in Love* could never have been a success. It has no foundations; it is a feeble construct on an ugly and baseless idea. Namely that Shakespeare was a dickhead with a Boyzone range of thoughts, suffering a soap star's depression in conjunction with a romantic novelist's writer's block.

I'll be round with you. It's not on Shakespeare's behalf that this bothers me. We must assume, by now, that Shakespeare can take care of himself. Even the best jokes against his tendency to blustering grandiloquence and pedantry - remember those in-

shouted a lot and busted unnecessarily, considering that shops weren't open for as long as they are now (anachronism joke). Shakespeare encounters Gwyneth falls in love with how her voice coach has taught her to pronounce English and how many lines she knows from plays he hasn't written yet, and subsequently spills out of her bed carrying pages of manuscript. Was it Rodin who said he sculpted with his penis? The message of *Shakespeare in Love* is that Shakespeare wrote with his Gwyneth, bed, nipples, love, moan, morning, manuscript. Magic. No ink. No pen. Nothing. Just Gwyneth in his arms and that's *Romeo and Juliet* completed. Next? Well, next in the film's solipsistic romantic chronology is *Twelfth Night* and that's all to do with Gwyneth also. Steadfast in life, she must be the model for Sebastian's constant sister. For surely Shakespeare could never have imagined constancy?

We are out of the cinema long before we get to any problem plays (*Shakespeare in a Bit of Fizz-Wizz?*) let alone the tragedies (*Shakespeare Upset?*). Which is probably for the best.

Plucking out the heart of Shakespeare's mystery is the name of the game. Behind the offered good-naturedness of the film's determined anti-intellectualism lies a mean-minded academic conspiracy.

The conspiracy of the historians. You will find historians in every university in the world, invariably the deliverers of the dullest lectures because they believe in dullness with a flameless passion. They are the ones who tell you that nothing is ever to be

understood in any work of literature unless you know everything about the time in which it was written, and what precisely befell its writer. For this is the beginning and the end of their own expertise. Any interest in the writer's intelligence or imagination, the largeness of his mind, his power to fuse his particular experience with general thought, is considered uneducated, unacademic, fanciful and unreliable.

On the surface this is anti-populist because it gives primacy to scholarship and abstruse knowledge. No work is truly open to you, it says, because you don't know enough. But it meets the present preoccupation with finding a voice in which to please everyone - dumbing down, if you like - in this way: it makes us all equal before the accidents of experience. No one is exceptional. No one makes choices of a different order to the choices we all make. No one thinks otherwise. No one is serious. No one seeks to be unconfined by the common.

Odd, that a moment in the history of the obfuscation of literature should have found popular expression in a movie which flatters ignorance and incuriosity. But maybe everything is now tending to lightness. Fall in love, go on stage, take your pants off, have a laugh, be a sport. Live in your context.

In fact *Shakespeare in Love* tells us a lot more about us than about Shakespeare. The film would pluck out the heart of his mystery, but it doesn't sound him to the top of his compass. It merely sounds our own lowest ooties.

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MEDIA

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Kosovo crisis

Sir: Bombing the Serbs will solve nothing. As far as they are concerned, Kosovo is their Holy Grail, and has been an integral part of Serbia for 800 years. They are defending their sovereignty from illegal amputation by a minority. Any Anglo-US attack would have no international mandate and would break international law. It would be an act of aggression against a sovereign state.

Your leading article (22 March) doesn't mention what bombing would achieve. The answer is: nothing. If anything, it would harden the resolve of the Serb people. Although it is pitiful to see civilians fleeing from their homes, Kosovo's Albanians should have known that Serbia will never forsake its "Jerusalem" (which accounts for 20 per cent of the republic) without a fight. Serbia is quite evidently expendable to the Kosovo Albanians and the US and British government hint she isn't expendable to the Serbian people. D NOVAKOVIC-PAVLOVIC London W6

Sir: President Clinton said on Friday with reference to Kosovo, that "hesitation is a licence to kill". True. An enormous human tragedy is unfolding before our eyes. Why are we witnessing hesitation?

Nato should have acted on Saturday, as soon as the observers had left. Yet we see Richard Holbrooke making another visit. Is it to ask Mr Milosevic's permission to commence hostilities?

Two things are needed very fast. First, a safe area to be created for the Kosovars, free of all Serb security forces. This will need a very large number of ground troops, because the local Serb civilians also need protection and because Serb forces need to be ejected. And second, a speedy referendum for the Kosovars on full independence from Serbia.

Furthermore, the capture and trial of President Milosevic for war crimes is not just desirable but it is imperative, because the parallel with Saddam Hussein and the Kurds in northern Iraq is becoming too painfully obvious.

GEOFFREY R CLARK Meopham, Kent

Sir: President Milosevic has refused to accept a foreign peace-keeping force in Kosovo, but Nato air strikes on Serbia will not make peace in Kosovo more realisable.

Western European and US mediators may have run out of patience in Paris but bombing a sovereign country to force it into signing a peace accord is a dangerous game. Air strikes against Serbia should not just be seen in the context of retribution for Serbian atrocities against the Kosovan Albanians. For rather than persuading Milosevic to sign up to the peace agreement, Nato action will only dissuade the Serbs from entering any further peace negotiations and create a further rift between Nato and Russia.

Unlike Iraq, Serbia has no weapons of mass destruction and is not threatening its neighbours. We may feel uncomfortable about the situation in Kosovo but air strikes are not a catch-all solution for every ethnic conflict.

MARK FRANKEL London NW3

Brightest and best?

Sir: The Government's wonderful windfall for the brightest children is absolutely in the right direction ("Heads attack high flyers tuition plan", 22 March). The big drawback, though, is in the manner of selection of the top 10 per cent - by teachers.

When teachers select the gifted they almost invariably choose well-behaved children who are already highly achieving. Pupils who are outspoken and different are much less likely to be granted access to this bounty, no matter how great their potential.

It is vital that pupils be given some say in their own educational plans. The evidence is that it is their interests and enthusiasm which provide the basis of their future successes, not teacher



HMS Invincible No 2: The two keys to maintaining morale at sea are mail and food. On their bunks in the Junior Ratings quarters, chefs Matthew 'Smidge' Smith, 25 (right) and 'Sharky' Neale, 21, from St Helens, take a break from providing meals 24 hours a day

Neville Elder

approval. As with sport, every child should have the opportunity to practice and use extra facilities in other areas. I've termed this the Sports Approach in my recent Ofsted report on *Educating the Very Able*. It is an inexpensive route and could provide the means for the underachieving gifted to reach high levels.

Professor JOAN FREEMAN London W1

Murder island

Sir: Let us hope Kenneth Taylor's chilling account of the growing numbers of British-Jamaican pensioners who have been murdered after retiring to Jamaica ("Paradise lost", 19 March) will finally force the Jamaican government to move away from its usual defensive stance on such reports, and do whatever is necessary to stop these slayings of innocent pensioners when they return to what they genuinely hoped would be "home sweet home in paradise".

For too long, the Jamaican government and many Jamaicans have tended to be defensive when issues such as the appalling levels of crime and violence in Jamaica are exposed in the foreign media. The common complaint, particularly from the Jamaican High Commissioner here in Britain, is that Jamaica always gets negative reporting in the British media and stories are often reported "out of context".

The reality is clear: 1998 alone, over 300 people, including a number of pensioners from Britain and the USA, were murdered in Jamaica, a country of just 2.5 million people.

If the Jamaican government is serious about wanting visitors and expatriates to "come to Jamaica and feel all right", then it had better start finding solutions quickly to its biggest challenge, the frightening reality of crime and violence in Jamaica.

B D BURRILL North Greenford, Middlesex

Transplant consent

Sir: The recent correspondence regarding organ transplantation has been interesting, and in part alarming. To me, as a nurse, it seems that medical science and technology have progressed with little regard for ethical values.

At the start of my nursing training I was taught to have just as much respect for the dead as the living, and the deceased patient was always left for an hour before our final caring was carried out. Over the years I worked in many units, and never met one nurse who challenged this approach. More recently, in charge of wards which received people with head injuries, that is potential organ donors, a problem arose.

I know that relatives never had the procedure for organ removal fully explained to them - nor did they ask for it. They assumed that their loved ones would be dead in the commonly understood sense, and at this tragic and emotional time it was sometimes a help to them to feel that their bereavement could help some other family.

Mr T T King (letter, 16 March) is correct when he says that many nurses dislike the use of beating-heart donors. We have a much closer relationship with patients and their relatives than the medical staff and find it alien to the principles and practice of nursing.

Sir: I am sure all Virgin Rail passengers will join me in offering heartfelt congratulations to the Breitling Orbiter team on being the first to circumnavigate the world by balloon.

NIAH MANSFIELD Cramlington

Sir: Dr Graham Gould (letter, 19 March) could not be more wrong about political correctness. It is always about having the power to dominate by controlling

I completed my career in the hospice movement, where people are allowed to die peacefully, and I just pray that sooner rather than later and alternative to live transplant surgery will be found.

In the meantime everyone should be offered full details of the procedure currently used before being issued with a donor card. They would then be giving informed consent.

Mrs SHEILA RING Chaldon, Surrey

Bleating truckers

Sir: Let's not be taken in by the bleatings of the road haulage lobby ("Talks offer to avert London lorry protest", 22 March). The lorry industry has had its own way for far too long, ruthlessly undercutting the railways and by the early 1990s almost destroying the rail freight network.

This was thanks to the £23bn road-building programme and massive hidden subsidies (the industry made no contribution to the huge environmental costs it imposed). Gordon Brown is at last doing something towards levelling the steep road/rail playing field for freight.

As to their threat to register lorries abroad: so what? Many of the rail wagons in UK domestic traffic are registered in France and Germany. And virtually all British commercial ships fly

foreign flags of convenience.

Whatever the tax regime, truckers will continue to dominate the freight industry for many years to come. If some of the corner-cutting cowboys are put out of business, that won't be a bad thing. But don't expect to see many fewer juggernauts on our roads.

MARK DORAN Oxford

No silver lining

Sir: Once again the "silver lining" of depression re-emerges ("The darkness that has brought humanity light", 20 March).

Unfortunately the works of Dickens, Greene, Balzac and other creative artists who have suffered from depressive illness is a benefit to society in general and not to the sufferer. It is but a short step to arguing that while society may sympathise with these individuals for what they endure, it is a price worth paying for works of genius.

The vast majority of us who suffer from depression do not fall into the category of genius. We are ordinary people with average levels of ability. If offered the choice between being depressed and immensely talented or not depressed and untailed, I know no depressive who would opt for the alleged gift of genius. The agony is beyond compensation.

STEPHEN HARRISON Stonehouse, Gloucestershire

Numbers game

Sir: Alarmed at the rapidity with which the next phone number change is upon us and having received no notification from BT about the effect of the changes, I called the BT operator to find out what my number will be after 1 June.

The operator didn't know but gave me the BT national number-change number (0800 224 2000). This, on dialling, was unobtainable.

On calling back, I was told that 0181 will be replaced by 0208, and that my present seven-digit number remains unchanged for local calls. This operator also found the free phone number unobtainable, although she did eventually locate another number which got me through.

I was then given information which contradicted what I had been told earlier: my local number does become eight-digit.

Can I reprint my company's stationery on this basis?

ALEC BARTON London SE23

Public art

Sir: It is understandable that people who own works of art on which inheritance tax has been waived should be reluctant to admit strangers to their houses to see them ("Hidden art forced out of the closet", 20 March). Apart from the security risks, private houses are simply not equipped to deal with visits from the general public.

The obvious answer is that the works should be displayed from time to time in premises which are so quipped: public halls and galleries. If large numbers of privately held pictures, furniture and so forth were assembled each year in regional exhibitions, far more people would see them and the owners could preserve their anonymity.

JOHN SWAN Kedington, Suffolk

Kids today

Sir: It is not surprising that British children are spending more time indoors watching television and playing computer games ("Our generation of couch potato kids", 19 March). Parental safety fears and lack of time to supervise children are factors, but they hide a more profound problem - the lack of priority given to investing in developing good-quality safe playgrounds and safe communities.

Our own work with young people backs what the LSE's latest study shows, that "children prefer to get out". So why aren't we taking action to improve play opportunities for children and young people? In some areas of the country play facilities are practically non-existent and badly maintained. In one area where we work, children actually built their own bike track after their attempts to get the council to make improvements failed.

The Audit Commission's last survey of children's playgrounds shows that just under one playground is provided for every 500 children (1995). But giving children better play opportunities it is not just about building playgrounds; local authorities need to take a more integrated approach and look at ways of creating communities where children can move between play areas, schools and their homes in safety. In the Netherlands, where proper provision for cycling is made, 60 percent of all the journeys children aged between 12 and 15 make are by bicycle; this compares to 6 percent in Britain.

Instead of reaffirming the fears that parents have about allowing their children to venture outside, it is time we started tackling those fears by building better safer communities for children to play.

BOB REITEMEIER

Operations Director

The Children's Society

London WC1

Sir: Barbara Kew's reasoning (Letter 20 March) is bizarre. For from learning "most of their problem-solving techniques from their parents", children tend to judge, and then reject, almost everything their parents have done.

My own divorced parents' four children all reached either death or retirement happily married to one partner. I cannot answer for my siblings, but I know that the spectacle of my parents' miserable disloyalty to each other made me determined to make a better job of the business of marriage. Far from accepting, as Barbara Kew does, that divorce will increase with each generation, I feel that a successful marriage may be the only decent thing left to which our children and grandchildren can aspire.

Everything else, today, is too easy.

Mrs DORNAE POTTS

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Brussels democracy

Sir: David Aaronovitch (Comment, 18 March) urges Tony Blair to adopt an open list for elections to the European Parliament next time around. Yet in his proposal for an elected Commission, he favours a closed system, with Commissioners being elected only by their own countrymen.

The Parliament is a representative assembly, but the Commission is not about national interests - that's what the Council of Ministers is for - but for taking action, when appropriate and with due regard to subsidiarity, in the interests of Europe.

So if there are to be elections for Commissioners, as an Irish person I would like to be able to express preferences for candidates of all nationalities, not least that of England.

MIKE NORRIS

Dublin

Many tautologies

Sir: I'm sure the *hoi polloi* aren't in the least bothered about the tautologies your correspondents A J Edwards and Andrew Teal are so incensed about (letter 22 March) IAN FLINTOFF London SW6

Is there really intelligent life beyond the M25?

RUNNING MY eye through the BBC radio programmes scheduled for this week, I see that this new London literary festival called "The Word" has done well out of Radio 4. On Monday alone we got *Start the Week: Radio 4 at the Word*, followed by *Serial: Radio 4 at the Word*, and, late at night, *Book at Bedtime: Radio 4 at the Word*. *From Rov* is scarcely unable to stay away from it all week, and Melvyn Bragg has also been unable to resist the temptation in his weirdly titled Thursday chat show, *Melvyn Bragg - in Our Time: Radio 4 at the Word*, except that this week it's got the even more cumbersome title, *Melvyn Bragg - in Our Time: Radio 4 at the Word*.

A couple of puzzling things about this. One is why it's called "The Word" and not "The Word". The

other is why it's getting such saturated coverage on Radio 4. After all, this is an untested aeroplane they're taking up for a spin. It is billed, surprisingly, as London's first literary festival, so you'd think they'd give it a year or two to let it get into its stride before giving Radio 4 over to it.

I don't remember such coverage being given to the Cheltenham Book Festival, or Hay-on-Wye, or the Edinburgh Book Festival or even the just-finished book festival at Bath, certainly never in their first year.

So why does a London book festival get all this amazing free coverage? Because it's in London, dum-dum. Everything that happens in London gets greater coverage than things that happen without anything.

Also, it's so very convenient having it all happening in London.

Why? Because the people who give it coverage also live in London, and the people they work for also live and work in London, and the people who run the BBC and edit the papers live in London, and they would be less than human if they didn't think that everything that happened in London was more interesting than anything that happened elsewhere.

You or I, living outside London, might think it would be more interesting to have a programme about why London is so uncultured that it has never had a book festival before, but you won't get many people in London thinking that's at all interesting. Nobody in London ever imagines London ever being without anything.

It's a thing you remain virtually unaware of when you're London-locked. Women often tell me how

Margaret Atwood, and, um, other very famous people all coming into London at the same time and we can pop them into a taxi one by one and get them into the studios at Broadcasting House, if we've got any studios left at Broadcasting House, that is, to record them cheaply and fill the airwaves with writers talking and reading their stuff, and we'll look as if we're doing our cultural duty, and we won't have to pay travelling or overnight expenses for any of them!"

I am not anti-London. I lived in Notting Hill for 20 years and loved it. It's just that having moved out of London 10 years ago I have gradually come to see how London-centric the press and media are.

It's a thing you remain virtually unaware of when you're London-locked. Women often tell me how

Evening Standard, which is a local evening paper in the London area. She has no national presence that I am aware of at all. Can you imagine the food critic of the Edinburgh Evening News being asked on to *Desert Island Discs*?

No, the plain truth is, when people are well-known in London they are assumed to be well-known everywhere, and that anything that is important to Londoners is important to all, which must be a very warming feeling if you live in London, but tends to piss off the very large majority of people who don't and won't live in London.

On the other hand, lots of other interesting things do happen 100 miles from London that never get mentioned in the London papers. I'll take a risk and promise to mention some of them tomorrow.

John Vito 15/03

rdies

Remedial lessons for Tony



DEBORAH ORR

If Blair thinks his latest scheme is anything other than risible, it's time for him to go back to school

IT WAS there, disturbingly, in Glenn Hoddle's incident and in one of the bottom wiggles and jiggles of the Liverpool footballer's life. It was evident in a letter the *London Review of Books* in which a correspondent claimed a journalist, Christopher Blatchley, had confessed himself to be a spy and had argued that sexual preferences are a legitimate subject for humour at all possible.

The people who find so much to disapprove in modern life are almost certainly being wordy, but that it still means

on politicking.

Then let me make an exception for hopeless cutters like Tony Blair and send them off for tuition as well.

Because Tony is really in need of education, education, education (and if he responds, then he can take time out and reward himself with a little education).

If Tony thinks that his latest initiative, whereby talented pupils can volunteer for extra tuition in the evenings and on Saturday mornings, is anything other than risible, then it's time for him to go back to school. And this time he can go to the kind of school he's had no experience of – a comprehensive.

For there are a few lessons Tony really ought to have learned before he decided he was the best person to run the country on an education ticket, which he clearly knows nothing about. Lessons like what it is like to be educated at a comprehensive school; why it is that some comprehensive schools are such a mess; and what teenagers at comprehensive schools are like.

In the Seventies, I was educated at a huge new comprehensive myself. So I'm in a good position to teach Tony a few lessons. One fine day in spring 1974, a day that had seemed perfectly normal to myself and the 40 or so other children I'd grown up with through our seven years at primary school, something unusual happened. Without warning or explanation some grown-ups joined our teacher in the staffroom and handed all of us odd booklets full of gnomic questions which we were told to fill in under the exam conditions we'd been familiar with from our school's end-of-year tests.

Although it wasn't spelled out to us, we knew that this was something to do with the "big school", which, in the days before parental choice, we'd all be attending the next year.

We were all in the catchment area for Garrison Academy, in Merton, which was a source of a little bitterness to some parents, my own included, because we lived about 200 yards out of the catchment



There are some things Tony Blair really ought to have learned before he decided he was the best person to run the country on an education ticket! Fiona Hanson/PA

area for Dalziel High. Dalziel was a long-established school which had recently gone comprehensive, and had maintained its excellent academic reputation. Garrison, on the other hand, had been recently built to accommodate the children from the new council estates. Its reputation was not so hot.

We duly turned up on the first day at the big school that September, to be greeted with lists pinned to the noticeboard. All of our names were on these lists, we were told at assembly, and we should look at them to find out which teaching class we'd been allocated to. I was thrilled to find I was in 11, the top set. But as we all regrouped to discuss what classes we were in, the same problem kept coming up.

Lots of the names on the lists didn't make any sense. Children we knew to be academically weak had been placed in the top sets, while children we knew to be very clever had been placed near the bottom. Margaret Simpson, who'd generally been considered at our primary to be the Cleverest Girl In The Class, had been allotted to 13. She was gutted, because only the top two sets got Latin, and she'd fully expected to be *amazing* and *amazing* with – to use a phrase regarded by some as having no place in discussion of state education – the best of them.

It's also important that it should be recognised that there are all kinds of different academic needs among any group of children. While I thrived at my supposedly crappy comprehensive school and, like quite a few of my fellow pupils, went on to study at university, the experience of my younger brother was quite different.

By the time he went to the big school, four years later, setting was out and mixed-ability teaching was in. The idea, laughably, was that it wasn't fair for pupils to be stigmatised by the knowledge that they were in low sets. But as the accurate assessment by my classmates of the shortcomings of the initial setting process at Garrison illustrates, children form pecking orders and are aware of their places within them without any guidance from adults at all.

By the time my brother left school, at 16 and with barely any qualifications at all, he was under the impression that he was thick. He believed that further education was not for the likes of him, and his qualifications backed this up. It took many years to persuade him that this was not so, and he is now a mature student, sailing through the course at a leading art college, just as he could have done 15 years ago had he not been taught in classes unsuitable to his needs and also the needs of most of his classmates. So Blair and Blunkett should not be

"encouraging setting". It should be reinstated as compulsory.

But this of course was not the only factor which made my brother's education at the same school so much less effective. Just as the Spartans of the loony left implemented policies that went too far in addressing the world as they would have liked it to be, rather than as it was and is, the Thatcher government came in. I was in my final year at school. I missed the cutbacks, the erosion of morale, the ghettoisation and abandonment of the initially working, later redundant, classes that continued unabated for two long decades.

It is unbelievable that Tony Blair still needs to be taught this, but he does. A flurry of misguided and inflexible educational initiatives, driven by ideological theory rather than academic need, were disastrously followed up by 20 years of hostile and systematic neglect. That

is what is wrong with our schools, and every penny possible should be spent on improving them for all pupils. Earmarking a chunk of funds for those who are, by definition, doing just fine, is the kind of policy that caused all of these troubles in the first place.

If this were the only reason why the new "master class" policy is mind-bogglingly inappropriate, that would be bad enough. But it isn't.

The Paymaster General answers a recent article by Natasha Walter on working mothers

NATASHA WALTER ("Women on the verge of breakdown") suggests that the Government is ignoring the plight of parents who are out of work, particularly those with young children for whom choices are not easy. This is simply not the case.

We recognise that there are complex reasons why parents are unable to take paid work at particular times. We took action in the Budget to substantially increase child benefit and income-related benefits for children under 11. This clearly shows the Government's commitment to fighting child poverty.

This Government is also delivering for parents who want to work but for whom work simply would not pay under the old system. By targeting tax cuts at those who need them most and introducing the working families tax credit (WFCTC) to replace the outdated family credit, the Government is providing real help for people whose needs have been denied in the past. For example, a lone parent earning £25 a week, working more than 15 hours and with a young child will receive WFCTC, an extra £86.55 to supplement her wages through the WFCTC and the more generous child benefit.

We are also tackling the financial uncertainty felt by many lone parents thinking about moving from welfare to work by allowing them to continue to receive income support payments for two weeks after they move into work.

We also recognise that, with many couples, both parents want to work, so the WFCTC will provide more generous help with childcare and tackle the situation where many second earners would have lost over 70 pence of every extra pound they earned in tax.

So we are working to ensure every child and parent is given real opportunity.

Love, art and fatal pride

TUESDAY BOOK

PUSHKIN'S BUTTON
BY SERENA VITALE, TRANSLATED BY ANN GOLDSTEIN
AND JON ROTHSCHILD. FOURTH ESTATE. £16.99



Russia's greatest poet, killed by a duellist's pistol Hulton Getty

Born into a dishevelled aristocratic family, Pushkin was the great-grandson of Peter the Great's African favourite, Hannibal. This tincture of blackness appearing in St. Petersburg, the snowy babylon of the north, set him aside from all his contemporaries. Literary geniuses – the prose is hardly less wonderful than the poetry – enhanced his misfit status at every turn. And acclaim came quickly, rude, passionate, anxious, charming, he easily managed to get himself exiled to remote provinces for his frequent book-taking examination.

Eventually the tsar invited Pushkin for a private interview and decided to become the poet's personal censor. Far from being an advantage, Pushkin found this even more suffocating while, being an aggressive snob, he also felt he should have been accorded a higher rank than he was. Obviously, his personality also had allure: after a womanising youth he married "the most beautiful woman in St. Petersburg, the 18-year-old daughter of a businessman and the youngest of three sisters. The tsar took a great liking to her, too. She was in constant demand, and Pushkin's court expenses rocketed accordingly.

Enter Baron Georges d'Anthès, a French adventurer in the Russian army and adopted son of the Dutch ambassador to St. Petersburg. He fell ecstatically in love with Mrs Pushkin. Anonymous letters were sent (not by d'Anthès) to the poet, welcoming him to the Order of Cuckolds. Pushkin challenged d'Anthès to a duel but was calmed by intermediaries.

The Frenchman, in a strange twist to the story, now married Mrs

views. Economically as well as socially he was insecure, and like many such men was over-sensitive about his honour and frequently issued duel-challenges for negligible slights. The strutting world of continental counts and barons is always slightly absurd to the English, but even Pushkin's peers found his behaviour somewhat excessive. At the same time, like Hamlet, he was a prototype of "the alienated modern", something this book successfully conveys.

Pushkin's sister to be closer to his beloved. Two weeks after the marriage, Pushkin issued another challenge, though Mrs Pushkin and the Frenchman had never been alone together except once for a few minutes (and Pushkin himself was occasionally sleeping with the third of the sisters).

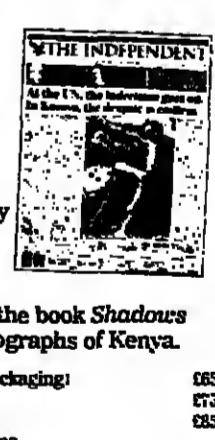
The poet was wounded in the duel and died two days later, aged 37. D'Anthès, aged 25, was banished from Russia.

Serena Vitale's account of the final days is the most moving and effective part of the book, probably because it is the least fussy. Elsewhere she can be very confusing and sometimes degenerates into claptrap. "The Muse is a clever prima donna, seldom yielding to mortals, carefully timing her fits into the world and savouring their effects in advance." Can one conceive of a sentence with less meaning?

Like all Italians, she has an instinctive empathy with the artist: "When he wasn't writing, Pushkin was always on edge." But she is not very good at convincing us of Pushkin's greatness. At one point she remarks "He stuns us with his max-

THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL

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TUESDAY POEM

SECONDHAND BOOKSHOP
BY SARAH LAW

An elderly man peruses a Northern European flora; he phones his wife for guidance. Upstairs, I discover that Jesus lived in India, having spent his glorious hidden years learning to live life by almost taking leave. His crucified feet walked there; the Kashmir rug pulled back; I read stigmata on the tomb. Later, I search for a bidding price for Florence Nightingale's advice – tea soothes the early morning waker, although jelly and meat juice leave much to be desired; so count those scenes of London for the unknown engraver has walked.

From Sarah Law's first collection, *Bilss Tangle*, published at £6.95 by Stride Publications, 11 Sylvan Road, Exeter EX4 6EW

The Revengers' Comedy

Hell hath no fury like an author defending her spouse. But the best place for literary revenge is in fiction. By David Lister

When two of Britain's foremost ladies of letters go to war over the honour of a man, it is only fitting that they use the postman as an intermediary. When you live by the pen, you aim to destroy with the pen.

Students of literature need little introduction to the dramatics personae: Victoria Glendinning, prolific biographer, most notably of Swift, Trollope and Vita Sackville-West, and Shirley Conran, author of sex and shopping novel *Lace*, but more pertinently a name associated everywhere but the Glendinning household with the word *Superwoman*, the title of her bestselling lifestyle guide for women juggling housework, careers, children and tricky husbands.

Which brings us to the third party: Kevin O'Sullivan, currently married to Ms Glendinning and former husband of Ms Conran. But, alas, being married to Superwoman does not necessarily turn you into Superman. In a recent interview Conran explained why she had failed to mention their marriage in her *Who's Who* entry. It was, she said, because he was a "layabout," and their marriage "a big mistake".

Reading this shur upon her man put Glendinning in a fury. She narrowed her eyes and reached for her pen. Students of 18th century literature could justifiably become excited. Here was the woman who knows more about Britain's greatest satirist Jonathan Swift than anyone alive. What withering metaphor would she use to humiliate her erstwhile rival?

Glendinning could have summoned all the political riffs, the satirical sweep of Swift, flavoured with the poise and style of Sackville-West. Instead, she told Conran that she was guilty of libel and blurted: "If you do it again there will be hell to pay from me, so look out."

Fans of Glendinning's biographies will find this riposte decidedly disappointing. If there is satire it is brilliantly disguised. Perhaps its subtext is a lesson to all biographers that intense study of your subject does not necessarily endow you with genius. But Glendinning defends her style: "It was like being a school girl writing a mischievous letter."

Glendinning went on: "This is the second time to my knowledge - there may have been more - that you have libelled him. Just how flaky can you get?"

Superwoman was not impressed. She too was spurred to take up her pen, but deemed Glendinning unworthy of a letter: "I wrote back on a postcard and told her that I was not going to be intimidated by her threats," she told a newspaper. "She is obviously more interested in my ex-husband than I am and I wish her good luck with him. She'll need it."

A belated shift towards irony in those last few words, but slightly spoilt by Conran referring to Glendinning with some relish in her interview as "the Hot Victoria G". This fails as a quip because it is precisely what, Glendinning, the daughter of Lord Seehom, is.



Glendinning: rushed to defend husband Kevin O'Sullivan (inset) UPPA



Conran: described her ex-husband as a 'layabout' Kayte Brimacombe

As for Kevin O'Sullivan, the mysterious character on whom the exchange of letters revolves, there is - as in all well drawn characters in literature - room for disagreement on his motivation and growth. Conran claims the marriage left her in a "financial mess". She justifies her use of language with some linguistic precision: "As soon as we got back from honeymoon he chucked in his job. During the next year he only applied for one other job, hence the use of the word 'layabout'."

The couple married in 1972 and were divorced a couple of years later. Conran recalls: "I came back from a visit to my mother in Canada to find a note on the mantelpiece from Kevin. It said: 'By the time you read this I will be in Moscow. My wedding ring is in the waste-paper basket where it belongs.' Kevin didn't divorce me, he deserted me. We divorced by mutual consent."

By Superwoman standards this is small beer. Conran says of her first husband, Habitat founder Sir Terence Conran: "He was a *** about money, and I cannot forgive him for hurting our sons. Divorce is painful

It is no accident that two characters in the David Lodge novel

and children don't like it, and sometimes the painful things should just be forgotten, but the pain stays and some of it can just burst out." She adds in the interests of literary complexity that her eight years with him were among the happiest and most satisfying of her life.

In the case of Mr O'Sullivan, Conran is far more precise in her use of language and the contemporary resonances of the words she uses.

Take, for example, Mr O'Sullivan's job title. He is said to be a "consultant engineer". Conran claims he is a "salesman".

Of course Shirley Conran is indulging in a popular literary pastime: revenge is increasingly the refuge of a writer scorned. Of course, the most effective way to avenge oneself on a husband, be he a layabout or just a sub-prime, is to denigrate him under cover of fiction.

Philip Roth, after a stormy marriage to actress Claire Bloom, wrote

a much acclaimed novel, *I Married A Communist*, which features a neurotic actress.

It could have been worse. Bloom revealed in her own unsparring memoirs that while they were married Roth showed her a typescript of a novel in which a wife called Philip cheated continually on a boring, whining wife called Claire. She insisted he change the names, which however did not alter the underlying unpleasantness.

Amanda Craig's novel about literary London, *A Vicious Circle*, provided such a hostile portrait of her former boyfriend David Sexton (now literary editor of the *Evening Standard*) that the original publisher backed out of the deal after Sexton threatened legal action.

Five pieces of revenge literature have been so devastating, nor had such an A-list cast, as *Heartburn* by Nora Ephron, in which she wrote a thinly disguised account of the affair between her ex-husband, *Watergate* journalist Carl Bernstein, and Margaret (now Baroness) Jay, while

Peter Jay was British ambassador in Washington. She depicts the Jay figure as "an hysterical" with "a neck as long as an arm and a nose as long as a thumb."

Other exes finding themselves in print have protested through interviews and articles, rather than labour over a fully fledged novel. Among them are the former partners of Ian McEwan (accused of "stealing" Penny Allen's experiences in his fiction), Paul Theroux (who agreed to rewrite the sections of *My Other Life* to disguise his marriage) and Hanif Kureishi (said by Tracey Scofield to have "mailiciously" caricatured her as the boring and unattractive spurned wife in his novel *Intimacy*).

Julie Burchill, who has kept almost no detail of her own life from her audience, said yesterday: "I always read revenge literature. It's a scream. And I think the Conran/Glendinning row is a scream. It's great to see two middle-aged ladies going at it. It shows the life force is still there."

Her latest novel *Married Alive* is, she says, not autobiographical. "I

was never cheated on in my marriage. I was always the guilty party."

She is awaiting without undue trepidation the new book by her first husband, Tony Parsons, which is said to contain references to her: "He can do what he likes. He has written about me before. This book will sink without trace like the others."

Mr O'Sullivan, meanwhile, is leaving it to the women in his life to fight it out between themselves, confining himself to saying: "One of the reasons I divorced Shirley was to stop having to deal with her."

Neither protagonist in this newest outbreak of swinging literary letters was willing to add to their words yesterday. But perhaps the answer lies at both their homes say enough.

Ms Glendinning's had a message from her husband saying that neither Kevin nor Victoria was available.

Very much the couple, very together as all their friends attest.

Ms Conran delivers her own asseverative message: "I answer the phone between 6 and 8 in the evenings. I work during the day." Still every inch a Superwoman.

We just don't like each other

The pressures of living together are starting to tell. By Cayte Williams

THE STUDENTS have been living together for over six months now, and that old maxim that you don't really know anyone until you share a home with them is proving true.

Arguments over who sorts out the phone bill and who does the washing up carry on as normal and it has led to personality clashes.

Ian is getting fed up with Rosie. "She's so messy, we have to clean up after her all the time. In fact, we live with really dirty girls. They never take the bins out."

But is Ian one of those boys who expects girls to do all the cleaning? "Not at all," he protests. "Rosie's the only one not to have done any tidying up. Everybody helps but she does nothing."

"I don't hate her," he continues, "I just don't like her very much. She's narrow-minded and opinionated."

On a happier note, David reckons that he and Robbie are closer than ever. They were good mates before they moved into this house, but now they're joined at

the hip. "Living here has made me realise how similar we are," he says. "We have the same humour and spend hours talking crap to each other."

"We're from similar backgrounds," adds David, "and come from an ethnic minority living in Britain."

David came to England from Hong Kong when he was eight and went to school in Sunderland. "I would get picked on and it affected my self-confidence," he says.

"School kids would do Bruce Lee impressions, make jokes about Chinese takeaways, or take the piss out of the Chinese accent. Even grown men called you names when you walked

THIS STUDENT LIFE



SPRING TERM, WEEK 11 AT THE MANCHESTER STUDENT HOUSE

ROBBIE studying Economics

IAN studying Management

ALISTAIR studying Management

TASH studying Management

down the street. I knew Manchester would be different because I would be mixing with students who have less insecurities for a start. The few comments I've had have been from locals."

David had a row with Leona and Tasha the other day about a TV programme. He says: "I complained that all the questions on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* were culturally biased, in that if you weren't white and British you couldn't get the answers. But I was just trying to wind them up."

Tasha, whose father is from Sri Lanka, is glad she's living in England. "I've hardly ever come

across racism here but when I've been abroad I've got loads of hassle," she says. "I went to eastern Germany five years ago with a group of school friends who were white and I got such a shock. We got so much racial abuse. We weren't allowed into clubs or restaurants because of my colour. They've got problems there with the neo-Nazis and you could see there was a real ghetto between her ex-husband, Watergate journalist Carl Bernstein, and Margaret (now Baroness) Jay, while

Sri Lankan but she went to a very English" boarding school, Christ's Hospital in Essex. She passed the entrance exam and joined her brother there because her father knew it had a good exam pass rate. "My dad came over to this country to be a part of this country," she says.

So did she feel any cultural difference when she arrived at a "very English" school? "My daddy is Christian," she says, "and religion has a lot to do with upbringing, so no, I didn't at all."

THE JOYS OF MODERN LIFE

38. CITY FARMS BY CAROLINE STACEY

THE CITY farm, like the sports personality, is probably the ultimate oxymoron. These urban sanctuaries for farm animals, all sorts of animals, exist to give us deprived inner-city dwellers some of the benefits of the countryside, to make up for all that our environment lacks (you know, mud and more mud and absolutely nothing to do). They are so obviously a Good Thing, so why bother to nominate them as one of the pleasures of living in a metropolis?

For a start, one great thing about a city farm is that it is not in the country. They are accessible by bus or foot, unlike rural farms where there's no public transport, no way of walking safely along winding lanes, and footpaths are either blocked off or have snarling bulls wandering across them. On a city farm, there are no hazardous aging machinery or barrels of poison.

They are reasonably clean, there are no many dogs cruelly tied up, no expanses of ankle deep liquid manure, no need to put on speciality footwear. You can walk straight out of our city farms on to the comfort of pavements without changing shoes.

Above all they have a diversity of livestock to look at. Don't bother heading for open country to show children the kind of farmyard scenes they expect from picture books.

Either there will be no animals in evidence or just one species as far as the eye can see. Take East Anglia, for example, where monoculture means that fields of sugarbeet or turnips stretch to infinity. Elsewhere there may be chickens, hundreds and thousands of them, but they're hidden from view in battery hen houses. If any are visible it'll be nothing but sheep, sheep, sheep, or row upon row of cows, and that's the lucky ones allowed to live outside. Just as there's nothing but white folk wherever you look, and a homogenised breed of Conservative voter.

My parents live in a part of the country given over to the cultivation of mange tout and garlic. We naively took our two-year-old down there and had to get straight back in the car, cut across a terrifying dual carriageway and get out on the side of a wind-swept hill to look at some sheep on the other side of barbed wire. We'd have been better off up the road from home in London where he can see pigs, sheep, chickens, ducks, turkeys and geese wandering around the cobbled farmyard, a cow and her calf, rabbits and as great a variety of people visiting them. For biodiversity, just head for town.

The rustics can pity us our urban existence all the like. Call me a cow of the snooty metropolitan variety, but Hackney city farm provides our family with far more pleasure and interest than their benighted countryside. And it's the only one I know with an Italian cafe serving toasted focaccia sandwiches in an outbuilding.



Gerald Lewis

from Roald D

Q

and the Independent

The illustrator takes the stage

From Roald Dahl's books to *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the work of Quentin Blake mixes painting and drama. By Ann Treneman

Quentin Blake is Britain's best-loved and best-known illustrator. Those who have seen his work – and that must include every parent in the country – are jealous when I mention that I am to interview him. "But I'd love to meet him," they say. I am to report back. I drop his name to my eight-year-old and her eyes grow large at the thought that I will meet the man who drew *The BFG*. For once, she's genuinely impressed.

So here is my report. Quentin Blake is surprisingly quiet, but with a sense of humour that sneaks up on you. He is shortish with lively eyes and is thoughtful, eccentric, precise. I'm not sure where he stores his ego in his airy studio overlooking a square in London's Earl's Court, but I couldn't find it anywhere. "Do you really think that I'm the most famous illustrator in Britain?" he asks when I mention this. He continues: "Well, I don't know. People say things like that but it's kind of a fact that is hard to take in. You know it's always a surprise when you see someone reading your book."

If that is the case, he must live a life of perpetual surprise.

What a lot of raised eyebrows that would be to draw. He has illustrated some 200 books, including all of Roald Dahl's, as well as his own, such as *Mr Magnolia*. He illustrates the odd book for grown-ups, too, and has just finished *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* for the Folio Society.

The Word, the London Festival of Literature, has begun this week and for this he has drawn the Great Word Map, a sort of ink-stained and splattered *A to Z*. The festival has chosen 33 novels to symbolise 33 parts of London and Blake has done a drawing for each one. The books sit in a crate at the side of his studio. He likes to read, and so already knew most of them but a few, he admits, he got through "very fast". We look at the roughs. "Editors are always saying that the roughs are always better." He says sometimes they actually use them instead of the finished ones.

It is not long before I notice that we are not alone in his studio. Propped up against the wall on his slanted desk, which is littered with jars holding hundreds of pencils and pens, is a man. Or should I say, a character. Like most of Blake's creations, he is a study in motion, though his progress must be hampered slightly by the fact he is wearing stilts. He is angular with too-big yellow trousers and the pointiest nose. He looks like the quintessential Quentin Blake character, but I don't recognise him from the books. "Oh him," says Blake. "It's nobody. He's just somebody who lives in that drawing."

He is part of what Blake calls his "repetory company". He describes illustrating as a mixture of painting and theatre, but his heart is really with the latter. "Most people think illustration is like a version of



Blake: "It's always a surprise when you see somebody reading one of your books"; below, his version of the Caretaker, the Naked Civil Servant and Sherlock Holmes

John Voos

painting but, of course, a lot of contemporary painting hasn't got that narrative element at all. It's been purged of that." He talks about painters like Tiepolo and Tintoretto, whose works told stories and were full of drama. "What would they do now? They'd probably be in the movies, wouldn't they? You'd need that to get that sweep, those dramatic moments. Illustration now is probably a rather small version of that narrative theatre."

He rarely draws a picture without a person in it. "Yes that's true. I mean, animals count as people, don't they? Yes. I think so. Animals are people too." He returns to his comparison with the theatre. Some people like scenery, others a bare stage with props. Quentin Blake likes the latter. His work is full of props – wonky stoves and skew-whiff pans – but rarely does he paint the scenery.

It helps create the Polaroid effect, that feeling of capturing a moment. This is a quality he admires in painters, too. "I like Goya very much, because one of the things

you get there is this kind of instant quality, although they look as though they are going to be there forever. I don't know how he does that." He mentions Picasso and Degas. "I think Degas has come back having been unfashionable, rather in the way Dickens came back. People are coming to realise that you can do it like that. He was a wonderful draughts-

man, absolutely wonderful. You just love the way he does the line. You can feel it. Have you seen the ones of the brothels? That is a kind of illustration style he had. He did his paintings, but then he did these little pictures. They are more little instants, little moments. They are irreducible."

Quentin Blake is 66 now, and has been drawing ever since he can remember. He grew up in south London. His father was a civil servant, his

mother a housewife. At 14, he started sending cartoons to *Punch*. He cringes to think of it now. "They really were lacking in taste." This went on for two years. How many? "I seem to remember it was about 70," he says. "Then I sent them a plaintive note asking to come and see them."

He went up to the *Punch* offices which, he says, in those days were rather grand, like a London club or something.

He was put in waiting-room, next to a large woman, and given a copy of *The New Yorker*, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Then he sat, and sat, and sat.

"After quite a long time, the secretary appeared and asked what I was doing there. They had thought I was the woman's nephew. And by then it was too late to see the art director! But I did go back. And then he bought two of my drawings. They weren't that big, tiny, really."

At Cambridge, he studied English but, before becoming a teacher, he decided to give his drawing a go. He went to Chelsea Art School part-time. It was a term. He did life-drawing. "I was in a group called the Odds and Sods, not officially, but that is what we were. A collection of grey-haired ladies, immigrants and well, me." It sounds like a Quentin Blake drawing to me. "Then I used to go home and draw from memory and imagination. Which I've been doing ever since, actually."

He and Roald Dahl were teamed up because they had the same publisher.

Quentin Blake likes illustrating because of the challenge of drawing as others write, but Dahl was intimidating. "To begin with, I can remember thinking that he is just so famous. A power. I thought he's going to change things." In fact, sometimes it was the opposite. The original *BFG* wore an apron and books. Dahl didn't like the look

of that, though that is what he wrote, and gave him a waistcoat instead. Then there were the feet. "One day, a rather shapeless brown-paper parcel arrived, and in it was the big sandal," says Blake. "It was one of Dahl's. It was Norwegian. And he said: 'What about this?'" Now that is a footnote.

Illustrators never have to retire, and Quentin Blake doesn't see why he should. If he has a hobby, it is France, and he can draw there as well. He says that characters are something that happen when you draw. He sometimes contorts in sympathy as he is creating them, and makes faces to match theirs. So what's next? He has an idea for a new book, but after that isn't sure.

"I always think that I won't have any more ideas," he says. But, I say, you've had millions of ideas. "I know, but I can't think that I am going to have any more. You do one and then you really cannot believe that you are going to have another."

Further information on The Word literary festival: 0171-971 0408 and at www.theword.org.uk

From melodrama to poetry, melancholy to ecstasy

THOUGH BELLES-LETTRES are hardly his style, Harrison Birtwistle has a talent for choosing the words, whether taken from *The Greek Anthology* or David Harsent's poetry, that prove impeccably right for his uniquely created world.

Both these sources featured in the first concert of the Nash Ensemble's 1999 20th-century music series two weeks ago. The ensemble played Birtwistle's classic 1969 Cantata, which sets fragments by Sappho, and gave the world premiere of

The Woman and the Hare, a striking melodrama that overcame the problems inherent in the genre by a skilful juxtaposition of spoken and sung material, performed by reciter Julia Watson and soprano Claron McFadden.

The striking feature was the identity of both pieces shared. The textural juxtapositions and discontinuities of the Cantata were not just some identikit formula for 1960s avant-garde, but an original approach to the setting of text, renewed

CLASSICAL

NASH ENSEMBLE
PURCELL ROOM
SOUTH BANK CENTRE
LONDON

in the more recent work to a novel stage evolution. Birtwistle's arrangements of Machaut and Ockeghem motifs set the scene; and there were sharply focused accounts of his *Shears for Storob and*

Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* suite.

The evening's other premiere was of Colin Mathew's arrangement of Debussy's *Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*, tailored in ensemble to match the *Trois poèmes* by Ravel, a Nash Ensemble standard.

Perfectly tailored to their

role, they look set to become a significant addition to the ensemble's dazzling repertoire.

Last Thursday came the turn of younger composers to hear their work played by this talented group

and of special interest was the way in which each was able to conjure a personal sound from its heterodox line-up. Colin Mathew's *The Sleeping Lord* lent orchestral weight to its chamber textures, with soprano Valdine Anderson building from a quiet opening to forceful statement.

In Jonathan Harvey's *Song Offerings*, she rose to ecstatic heights, with a backing for string quartet whose exultant scoring matched the sun in the poet's own translation

of Harvey's how to draw finely-blended sounds from the ensemble. Julian Anderson can burnish its from clear beginnings how significant middles and ends. The close of each movement in his three-movement scheme was a genuine conclusion, not just a pause in otherwise continuous music. His later pieces will doubtless display a more flexible range of chord and gesture. But here he showed himself a likely composer for the new millennium.

NICHOLAS WILLIAMS

The poet meets the chattering class

POETRY

WOLE SOYINKA
POETRY CAFE
COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

him to talk. He tells me his name, twice. Then, at my request, he writes it down: Liu Hongbin. I tell him mine. We talk about poetry masterclasses. Has he been to one? Does he know what goes on? No. Nor do I. And how much longer before things get going, anyway?

Suddenly, a black writer in a gorgeous ochre turban drops a leaflet into my lap. "Welcome to the first Writers' Hotspot newsletter!" the front page reads.

"Are you a published poet?" I ask Liu Hongbin, looking up.

"Blake Morrison published my first poems in English, in *The Independent on Sunday*, nine years ago." He's just coming up to 3 o'clock. Everyone's making friends.

Everyone gets up and goes down stairs – we're about 12 now – where chairs get arranged in a rough circle.

I plump for a big old grey armchair that I haven't seen since I last visited my Uncle Ronald in 1974.

"I'm so sorry about the delay," says Wole Soyinka, with winning gravity. He has a slim folder of poems in one hand, a glass of white wine in the other. His hair forms a kind of ring

invitation to a writers' congress in Seoul. Mr Soyinka seems none-too-pleased by that.

Then Mr Soyinka tells us the really big news. "I must say, right from the start, that I am here under false pretences. I was not aware until last night – I arrived at eight o'clock, straight from Nigeria – that this masterclass was to take place. I thought I had refused to do it. I feel more at ease in theatre workshops. I don't much like talking about my work. I have made no preparations... Still, things shouldn't be too bad. We can talk more informally perhaps..."

I look at Liu Hongbin. He smiles back at me inscrutably – as I would expect him to do.

"What I should like to do," continues Wole Soyinka, "is to put myself into the position of attending a poetry masterclass such as this one. What would be the thing that I needed most?"

He takes a long, appealing-looking drink from the glass.

MICHAEL GLOVER

of white candyfloss around his face. His white beard points forward tuftily.

We all introduce ourselves: the bright-eyed, eager, pugnacious editor of African writing; the rather wan and flyblown woman who says: "I mess around really. I'm a dentist"; and the critic from Korea with the mac over his knee, he of the severe, downturned mouth, who tells Mr Soyinka that he's here to get an answer about some

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HEALTH

The smell good factor

Its powers and healing properties have been tried and tested; the French and Germans swear by it. But in Britain, aromatherapy is still not taken seriously. By Roger Dobson

When the first astronauts travelled into space, state-of-the-art technology was crammed into almost every square inch of their craft. There were monitors for their hearts, gauges for blood pressure, tests for bone density, and meters for measuring capacity. There were also games designed to prevent boredom, exercises and tasks to relieve stress, and pictures, music and sounds from home to combat depression.

But it soon became clear that one thing had been overlooked. There was nothing pleasant for the crews to smell in the sterile, hi-tech spacecraft. So acute did the problem become that early astronauts took to keeping their lemon- and lilac-scented hand-wipes for sniffing during leisure times.

As a result, astronauts on later missions were provided with sensory packs giving them a choice of well-known fragrances, as well as a few favourite smells from back home.

The power of the sense of smell has been known for thousands of years, but only now is evidence emerging that aromas, particularly those extracted from plants, are not only a psychological pick-me-up, but can ease some physiological problems, too.

Conditions as diverse as epilepsy and burn injuries, herpes and respiratory infections have now been successfully treated using clinical forms of aromatherapy.

In Britain, until now, it has been traditionally regarded as a kind of alternative massage therapy, good for toning the skin perhaps, but not us at all in treating illness and disease. In France and Germany, however, it's Europe's fastest-growing alternative therapy, and has evolved as part of medicine.

French doctor René-Maurice Gattefosse is now credited with being the father of modern aromatherapy, largely as a result of his seminal, three-volume work on the subject, which was published almost exactly 60 years ago.

"His theories put aromatherapy squarely on the basis of modern scientific thought and experimentation. He introduced the word aromatherapy and created the discipline of therapeutic application of essential oils," says Dr Kurt Schnaubelt, author of *Medical Aromatherapy*.

Clinical aromatherapy uses essential oils extracted from herbs, flowers, trees and fruits. These are the oils that give the aroma to the plant, but they also contain hundreds of complex chemical compounds, including aldehydes, terpenes, alcohols, esters and ketones, many of which are known to have a healing effect on the body. Whether massaged into the skin, consumed internally, or simply inhaled, the theory of aromatherapy is that these chemicals interact with the body.

"Because the molecules of essential oils are so minute, they penetrate human skin and enter the



Choose your aroma: many essential oils contain chemical compounds which have a curative effect on the body Tom Craig

bloodstream and organs. Scientists have found that the same oils gather in the same parts of the body time and time again," says aromatherapist Penny Rich.

As proof of the power of plants, aromatherapists are quick to point out that biochemists have been consistently raiding nature to find therapeutic compounds, from aspirin to St John's Wort for depression.

Just how the oils work remains unclear. In some cases, the chemicals in them may act at a local level, as with lavender oil for burns and acne, or they may work through the pleasant smell having an effect on

the brain and affecting the working of the immune system.

"Essential oils stimulate the sense of smell, which in turn affects the areas of the brain known as the limbic system. The link between emotions, fear, love, excitement, anger, and the release of body chemicals is well-established.

Aromatherapy, through its impact on the limbic system, can stimulate the release of neurochemicals, as well as hormones, in the body," says Barbara Rowlands, author of *The Which? Guide to Complementary Medicine*.

Although the power of essential

oils has been known for some time - the Egyptians were using myrrh and cedarwood for embalming 4,500 years ago - it's only since the arrival of biochemistry that the individual qualities and importance of chemicals found in plants has been truly realised.

At a psychological level, it's now known that pleasant aromas can ease pain and help with insomnia and depression, and aromatherapy is increasingly being used by nurses working with patients suffering from chronic conditions.

Some oils, including Spanish

oregano and rosemary, have been

used to treat bacterial infections, while a trial involving oil from the tea tree showed it to be effective against MRSA, which is a potentially lethal bug that is most commonly picked up in hospitals.

A study in California has found

that thyme oil was useful in treating

migraine, and in France, patients

with cardiac disease who were given

essential oils reduced the incidence

of further attacks. In a hospital-based

project in Birmingham, massage

and aromatherapy oils have been

used to treat epilepsy, and results

showed that one third of patients

were seizure-free after a year. Trials

have also shown that peppermint is

useful in the treatment of shingles,

while lavender oil helps deal with

cold sores.

Despite these trials and the

apparent successes of many essential

oils, there is still a reluctance in

Britain to accept aromatherapy as

a medical treatment.

"There are striking differences

between the French and British

approaches. In France, aromatherapy

was first propagated by medical

doctors which led to its integration

into conventional medicine," says Dr

Schnaubelt.

"The non-academic character of

aromatherapy in Britain is probably

the main reason why it is confronted

with a certain antagonism from the

conventional medical establishment."

Dr Schnaubelt concludes.

AROMATHERAPY TREATMENTS

■ **Upper Respiratory Tract Infections:** Thyme rubbed onto the skin provides forceful antiseptic action, while three to 10 drops of Bay oil applied to the lymph nodes fights off infection.

■ **Acne:** Peppermint oil capsules stimulate elimination of toxins from the liver, while lavender applied to the affected areas stimulates new tissue growth.

■ **Fitz German camomile taken during the acute stages detoxifies metabolic wastes from pathogenic micro-organisms.**

■ **Earache:** Two drops of

Eucalyptus oil on a cotton swab inserted gently into the ear. Lavender massaged into the surrounding area may also help.

■ **Stretch Marks:** Flax seed and hazel nut oils can be used for existing marks, while a blend of erol and cypress in hazel nut oil massaged into the skin during pregnancy can be used to prevent the characteristic stringy marks and discolouration.

■ **Conjunctivitis:** Add three to five drops of fresh lemon juice to a three ounce bottle of myrtle

water and spray into eye every hour.

■ **Insomnia:** Three drops of angelica massaged into the forehead.

■ **Nausea:** One or two drops of tarragon, rosemary and marjoram in water.

From *Medical Aromatherapy* by Kurt Schnaubelt, published this week and available

from Atria Books, £13.99.

Further reading: *The Which? Guide to Complementary Medicine*, £9.99

But how did I get herpes?

We associate genital viruses with infidelity. It's not always that simple. By Emma Haughton

FOUR YEARS into a steady relationship, Simon suddenly developed painful and ugly sores all over his genitals. His GP was booked up for several days ahead and, since he was running a high fever, he went to a casualty. A nurse took one look, and referred him to a genito-urinary clinic, saying he had a bad case of genital herpes.

"It was a bolt from the blue," says Simon. "Alison was my only sexual partner, and I was sure she'd been faithful." Indeed, when they both attended the clinic, Alison's vaginal swab tested negative.

Alison was as shocked as Simon. Although she'd had a number of sexual partners, there was no suspicion that any of them had herpes, and she was appalled to discover that she had probably unwittingly passed it on. "I felt really terrible. Simon was quite ill with it, and although the clinic said I hadn't got herpes, I knew I must have given it to him. They implied he'd picked it up from someone else, but I just knew that wasn't true."

Having lingered in the shad-

ow of Aids for over a decade, genital herpes recently regained the limelight when UK and US studies suggested its prevalence was much higher than previously assumed. As many as one in five people could be infected with herpes simplex virus type two (HSV-II), the virus for the more virulent form of genital herpes, although up to 80 per cent may be unaware that they have it. Genital herpes is also caused by the milder HSV-I, while this type usually causes cold sores around the mouth, it can infect the genitals through oral sex.

Official reports put the number of new UK cases at around 15,000 a year. "It's very likely there are many more potentially infectious cases presenting less typically," says Dr Derek Timmins, consultant in genito-urinary medicine at the Royal Liverpool Hospital, and a member of the Herpes Simplex Advisory Panel.

Herpes is a complex and mysterious disease, which transmits in ways doctors are only now beginning to understand. While it was always as-

sumed the virus could only pass on via active sores, recent research uncovered evidence of "silent shedding", where herpes transmits without the presence of blisters, using condoms just during active episodes may still leave partners at risk.

And not everyone has obvious skin lesions; some only experience occasional redness

■ **The emotional repercussions are often far worse than the physical**

or tingling in the affected area, but can still infect others through oral or penetrative sex. To complicate matters further, the virus can hibernate in the body for years before showing itself, often making it impossible to tell when or from whom you caught it.

The good news is that her-

pes, while incurable, is gener-

ally a mild and benign condition; only an unfortunate few experience recurrent and debilitating episodes, which can be as frequent as every three weeks. No one is sure what causes herpes symptoms to reappear; but triggers include stress, anxiety, fatigue, menstruation and infections like colds and flu. In most cases, however, the first appearance is the worst, and for many it is the last.

However, herpes can occasionally be dangerous for young babies, causing life-threatening encephalitis or brain-swelling. For reasons as yet unclear, neonatal herpes affects more babies in the US than in the UK, where the incidence is just two in 100,000.

"The biggest risk is to young babies in the first 6-12 months of life whose mother is infected with herpes for the first time at or around delivery," says Timmins. "The baby can be infected and its developing immune system is unable to cope. Babies can become ill, even die, if the condition is not recognised and treated promptly."

There are promising signs of

a vaccine, and acyclovir and the newer antiviral drugs can shorten the duration and severity of attacks, and even suppress recurrence. But for the majority of people the emotional repercussions of the disease are far worse than the physical. With herpes classed as a sexually transmitted disease, reactions to diagnosis include depression, anxiety, guilt, shame and fear of rejection.

"Unfortunately, misunderstandings about the way it's passed on can cause a lot of tension in relationships," says Marian Nicholson, director of support group Herpes Virus Association. "You can get genital herpes from facial sores, but doctors often imply that partners are bad."

"Ten years down the line, Alison and Simon are happily married with children. "Although it was awful at the time, it's not really changed our lives," says Simon, who has not had a recurrence. "We don't think about it now."

The Herpes Virus Association helpline is 0171-609 9061

I WOULD like to arrange a DNA test to discover who is the father of my son. Can this be done without going through my GP?

You can arrange this directly through a commercial laboratory, without the involvement of your doctor. Alternatively, a solicitor could arrange it on your behalf. You must have the co-operation of the presumed father, who will need to provide a blood sample, and your son will have to provide a sample of blood. If you, the mother, also give a sample, the test is simpler to perform. The tests will cost £360-£475, depending on the number of people tested. Contact Cellmark Diagnostics (01235 523600) for full details.

I GET a terrible pain in the sole of my foot the first time I put my foot to the ground each morning. The pain gradually wanes as I begin to walk, but I am left with an ache, punctuated by a sharp stabbing pain if I walk too far. I have had this for months. You have plantar fasciitis, an inflammation of the tissues of the arch of the foot where they attach themselves to the front of the heel bone. An X-ray might well show a small spur of bone - a heel spur - at the site of your

cause of the risk of serious or fatal reactions to them. A number of allergy clinics do, however, administer these under strictly controlled conditions. Another possibility is an injection of a long-acting steroid at the beginning of the season. But this also carries risks which probably outweigh the benefits of relieving your symptoms. A combination of antihistamine tablets, eye drops and nasal sprays is highly effective in controlling hay fever.

Please send your questions to *A Question of Health*, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL; fax 0171-293 2182; or e-mail to health@independent.co.uk. Dr Kavalier regrets that he is unable to respond personally to questions.

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We shouldn't be gambling with the NHS

HEALTH CHECK



JEREMY LAURANCE

ROLL UP, roll up - buy a lottery ticket and save a life. It could, after all, be you with a lump in your breast or a shadow on your lung - and maybe, just maybe, the time will come when you need a body scan and a course of radiotherapy.

The passing of a watershed is sometimes greeted with fanfares and headlines, and at other times goes almost unnoticed. Last week's Government announcement of an extra £150m funding for cancer services from the National Lottery could be just such a watershed. But it may be years before we know.

Frank Dobson, the health secretary, was enthusiastic. The money, to be paid over three years, would be "the biggest ever bonus the country has given to cancer services", he said. "It will help us deliver modern and dependable cancer services for the 21st century, saving thousands of lives with better prevention, detection and treatment."

So the product of gambling itself a known health hazard, is to be used in an act of charity to the NHS to buy scanners, x-ray machines and vital new cancer killing treatments. It will come from the "New Opportunities Fund", a sixth good cause Labour added to the lottery's original five shortly after it came to power.

Who could complain about that? As recent figures have shown, Britain lags behind most of Europe on cancer treatments and many hospital departments are in urgent need of new equipment. Medical organisations found themselves backed into a corner. Where was the mileage in PR terms, in protesting about extra cash for cancer?

Clearly there is a place for charity in the health arena. Hospitals have their flower days, their leagues of friends, and their fund-raising events. The fear here is that the Government has crossed a boundary by ditching the principle that lottery money should never be used to subsidise state spending.

A founding principle of the National Lottery, endorsed by Labour in opposition, was that of "additionality" - that money should go only to schemes additional to those funded by the Government. Since scanners and x-ray machines are essential to the work of cancer departments but have also been bought for hospitals by charities, the definition of what is "additional" has been conveniently muddied.

Ministers deny they are exploiting this confusion and say they are merely building on local fund-raising efforts. There

is no question of state spending being eroded and they cite the £2bn promised over the next three years as evidence of their good intentions.

MEDIA

TV news has a duty to show us what armed conflict is really like, however distressing it may be. By Fergal Keane

Viewers, look away now

They were images of war's horror filmed close up, the kind of televised images that we rarely see in our newsrooms these days: soldiers firing wildly around the streets; crowds of terrified people cowering as the battle raged around them; a man running and begging for his life and then shot dead; and, in the final image, a boy of about 10 years old screaming for his life as Nigerian soldiers beat him and stripped him of his clothes.

The cameraman who filmed these images, Soroush Samra, has been covering the battle for Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, for several days. To do so he risked his life on an hourly basis. When I met him in Freetown he mentioned that he had some film. Would I like to see it? The following morning I sat and watched his video account of the battle. I soon realised that there was a great deal of material that simply could not be used – the vultures feasting on corpses outside the main hospital, the bodies set alight and burning in the streets, a man with his arms half hacked away.

But there were three images which I asked my cameraman to copy for me from the original tape: the man being executed, the child soldier being beaten and stripped and footage of a group of rebels setting fire to a house in which a family was hiding. At that point I had no idea how much of the material I would be able or want to use.

But as graphic illustrations of the brutality of the war in Sierra Leone they were without parallel: something told me these were images that deserved wider circulation.

Back in London and editing my first report for the *Nine O'clock News* I watched those images again and again. I showed them to as many of my colleagues as I could find. The editor and deputy editor of the *Nine* came into the edit suite repeatedly as we all tried to find a way of using some of the footage without offending good taste or alienating the audience. There were elements of what Soroush had filmed that simply could not be shown: the man being executed, the continual beating of the boy Moses, by the Nigerians, the way he was hurled naked on the road in preparation for execution (he was saved in the nick of time by a Nigerian general and Sierra Leone's information minister).

But we decided to use some of the material. My own logic was clear



A man suspected of collaborating with the rebels in Freetown is dragged into the street and moments later shot dead BBC

enough: this was a war that had claimed 5,000 lives in a few weeks, a war in which Britain was involved through its support for the Nigerian-led forces of Econog and the government of President Kabba. It was also a war in which thousands of children were being forced to fight as soldiers, mostly by the rebels.

I knew from my own conversations with Save the Children that the issue of child soldiers was escalating into a major international problem – there are at least 300,000 children fighting in adult wars around the world. The crisis has become so acute that Save the Children was bound to prove traumatic for some members of the audience. Throughout the day we debated

soldiers declared a war crime. And it also occurred to me that to describe a war as "brutal" and "savagery" without illustrating the truth of its brutality was pointless.

But we kept returning to a simple question: how much of this misery could we show without offending the audience or alienating them from the subject at hand?

And so we tried to edit and script as judiciously as possible, deciding against using the images of the prisoner as he was executed. With Moses, it was more difficult. Whatever we showed of his interrogation was bound to prove traumatic for some members of the audience. Throughout the day we debated

among ourselves and with the editors. At the end a consensus was achieved: we would show Moses being questioned, the initial blows being struck and the soldiers marching him on to the truck.

The imagery of the troops repeatedly beating Moses and the child lying naked on the road we would not show; we all took the view that they represented a horror too far. The critical point – that this war brutalised children in terrible ways – was clearly made by the images we finally decided to use.

We were of course careful to tell the audience that Moses had survived his ordeal and, indeed, we filmed him recovering at a special

camp for war children. I believed then and I believe now that we were right to transmit the story as we did. A number of viewers did not agree. Too graphic, too horrible, unfit for television, some said.

It was the image of the child being brutalised by the Nigerians to which they objected. I was taken aback by the complaints. Surely what mattered was the brutal abuse being inflicted on children, not the fact that a news organisation had chosen to show what was happening.

I was happy to see that some of the callers on the overnight telephone log felt we had done the right thing. Many said they had no idea such things were happening in

Sierra Leone, a country with which Britain has close links. The reaction from organisations dealing with children in crisis was especially heartening – there was unanimous approval for what we had done.

But if some people felt strongly that we should not have broadcast the images then, as a public service broadcaster and obliged to take their concerns seriously, I read through the telephone log of complaints and the e-mails. I also read a powerfully written, intelligent letter from a woman in Lancashire who wrote that showing such images changed nothing. After the Holocaust, Bosnia and Rwanda what was the point?

I disagree but that is a debate for another day. I am one of those who believes we should be judicious in our use of war imagery. I don't believe people should have horror forced down their throat every night. I have a three-year-old son and I don't want him going to bed with nightmares because of what he has seen on television.

That of course is why we have a 9pm watershed and why we warn audiences when we are about to transmit potentially upsetting material. But the fact is that there are times – the Rwandan genocide, the war in the former Yugoslavia and now Sierra Leone – when we need to show exactly what is happening, what is being done. Of course this should only happen after the watershed when the majority of those watching are adults.

However, I was surprised by the level of complaints from some members of the public. Of course they have a right to their point of view, and, as a public service broadcaster, I always make a point of listening carefully. But would we have been the same level of anxiety if a gruesome horror movie had been shown or a film with explicit sex scenes. I may be wrong but I rather doubt it.

We live in a world that seems very comfortable with the idea of horror as fantasy; we can watch Bruce Willis and his equals blow their enemies to kingdom come and our children can watch it and imagine that all of this televised violence is safe. But war and violence are not safe. They kill children and adults, they maim and destroy innocence. Every so often we need to be reminded of this.

The writer is a BBC special correspondent

IN A cost-cutting move of sheer genius, Express Newspapers' IT department decided it could save a little money if it removed the computer system which provides legal warnings for its electronic cuttings library. Clearly a luxury Lord Hollick's lean machine could do without. Almost immediately an old Hugh Grant interview was pulled up in which the actor was libellously quoted. The quote, which had cost The Express £30,000, was repeated at the end of a new story about Grant as soon as the warning system ended and his lawyers have been in touch. A new legal warning system has been ordered.

MEANWHILE, AT Associated Newspapers, there are different problems with computers. They keep sprouting legs and running away. Police are investigating the theft of nine new state-of-the-art laptops which disappeared through a hole in a secure room's ceiling, and at Weekend magazine a designer's computer has disappeared. But if the thieves hadn't been so blatant would an organisation as wealthy as Associated ever have noticed they were gone?

DURING THE Chinese cultural revolution no one could afford to be without the little red book of Mao thoughts. The BBC which, like the Chinese Communist party, is a monolith flitting with capitalism, has just produced its own little red book – a mission statement card to help employees remember the corporation's aim: "To be the world's most creative and trusted broadcaster and programme maker..." This turns into an eight-line sentence with nine subordinate clauses. As Orwell observed, the first victim of orthodoxy is usually the English language.

Plumbing the depths in the search for sleaze

Press coverage of John Prescott's visit to the Maldives to inspect dying coral was a travesty, argues Roger Harrabin

AFTER WADING through the press coverage of John Prescott's whistlestop visit to the Maldives I have developed an unfamiliar and unexpected sense of pity for some of Britain's senior politicians – and a sense of despair at the failure of the media to explain to the public the big picture of what on earth is really happening.

Here are the facts: the world has experienced the most pervasive and destructive death of coral reefs that scientists have ever registered. On some reefs in the Maldives, 95 per cent of corals are dead. In Vietnam, some ancient corals thought to be more than 1,000 years old have been killed. Some sober scientists are referring to the episode as a global catastrophe. And this month the US State Department asserted that climate change fuelled by the air pollution we create was probably partly to blame.

This massive and worrying upheaval in nature has scarcely been reported in the British media. Mr Prescott travelled to the Maldives at the end of an official visit to India to discuss the issue with the President and to gather ammunition for future global negotiations by witnessing the coral destruction for himself.

Here is the story as it was spun by most of the media: After years of condemning Tory sleaze, Labour are now up to their necks in it. John Prescott has taken an extravagant



John Prescott scuba diving

Charles Andearson

holiday at the taxpayers' expense. He is staying in luxury hotels, sipping pina coladas, getting a suntan, and having fun scuba diving on the coral reef. And by the way, he is fat ... so he is fair game for ridicule if he wears a wetsuit.

Of course, any ministerial visit to a paradise such as the Maldives was always rich in "junket story" potential and the Fleet Street die was cast when *The Sun* concocted a fictitious postcard from Mr Prescott to Tony Blair, apologising for missing the Budget while partaking of the big picture of what on earth is really happening.

The result for Mr Prescott was a very mixed blessing. He will go to forthcoming UN environment negotiations with increased personal clout, and may capture the imagination of his fellow ministers as he describes his dive in a "graveyard" of coral, and pleads for more action to cut pollution. He has also helped tell the coral story to millions of BBC listeners and viewers at home and abroad. But his integrity has been called into question.

This is a high price to pay. Mr Prescott felt it sharply. Mr Prescott was indeed thrilled by the fish life he saw on his dives, but the dive itself

was disrupted by potentially dangerous problems with his scuba equipment because he had not had time to try on the gear beforehand. And for the rest of the two-and-a-half day visit, Mr Prescott sweltered through visits and meetings in a full suit and tie in an attempt to deny a short-sleeved photo opportunity to a member of the British paparazzi.

With hindsight the Government's spin doctors could have avoided the easiest media hit by moving the story location from the honeymoon destination of the Maldives to the lesser-known Indian coral islands of the Laccadives. Presentationally this would have been safer, but the impact of the coral story would have suffered. The richer fish life in the Maldives made more powerful

TV and the "Paradise Lost" story of the Maldives had much more listener appeal.

I have returned from the trip with a burning anger at media trivialisation of a major environmental issue. Do the people who make news decisions really believe that the public do not care about such things as the future of the planet? And who in their right mind will want to lead the nation if we continue to hound all politicians as if they are all rascals and cheats?

Roger Harrabin travelled to the Maldives with the Deputy Prime Minister to report on the recent global surge of coral death. He is Environment Specialist on BBC Radio 4's *Today* Programme.

The global village still needs its parish pump

Figures show local newspapers now lead the way in increased sales, and national editors are taking note. By Naomi Marks

WHILE IT may be fashionable to speak of living in a global village, it seems that what people want most as we approach the millennium is news of what is happening on their doorstep.

Latest ABC results for weekly local newspapers suggest that a vigorous back-to-basics philosophy is paying dividends for these titles, with those concentrating most on parochial coverage recording remarkable sales increases.

And Independent Television Commission research shows that while, between 1991 and 1993, national news was the preferred programming, with local and regional news coming second, between 1995 and 1997, the positions reversed.

Mirror editor Piers Morgan plans to be the first national newspaper editor to take such findings seriously, with a regional offensive designed to capitalise on the public's apparent appetite for all things local.

Morgan won't go into detail about his planned "Project X", but says it is intended to repeat the sales successes notched up by *The Mirror* in Scotland and Ireland – both regions where he has set up *Mirror* "bedrooms", each with their own reporting team under a separate editor.

In Scotland, *Mirror* sales went from 20,000 to nearly 100,000 when the regional strategy was combined with price-cutting. Says Morgan: "We feel there's a lot of scope if you concentrate on particular areas where there is a real sense of community, rather than give them a load of stuff in the main edition, which is perhaps irrelevant."

It is an offensive that Morgan agrees, draws strongly on the roots strategy of local newspapers. After years of trying to stall sales losses by mimicking Fleet Street papers, many are now reverting to type – with parish-pump news proving a winning formula with readers.

As sales increased, local dog warden because of his relationship with the warden's wife, the paper splashed on the story, but it did so in typically restrained fashion. But it is the addition of the new Dover edition of the *M Mercury* that Smith has to thank for the bulk of the sales increase.

Others, too, testify to the success of editionising. Three of the top-five best-performing weeklies put their success down to this tactic. And the editors of the best-performing regional evening, the *Doncaster Star*, and best-performing regional morning, the *Poole Daily Express*, both point to keeping things "local, local, local" as the key.

There are, of course, other factors affecting the health of the local newspaper sector: not least a buoyant economy and an ownership restructuring, which has seen many papers return to the hands of dedicated regional press owners from large media conglomerates.

Piers Morgan admits that earlier attempts to increase regional coverage have been "a cop-out", consisting of either single-page changes or columns of regional news-in-briefs. "Project X" promises something different.

"What we've seen is that where we target the Irish and Scottish with their own news stories, and perhaps lead the paper on them more than the London-based stuff, then we do better. So, you would imagine that in places like Manchester and Birmingham, if we can offer some regional coverage which complements the main paper, then we can be successful, too. That's what we're going to do."

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We require 1 advertising manager and 4 advertising executives to sell advertising space on local information boards across the British Rail Network. Selling to local business over the telephone, you should have at least 18 months media sales experience and trained to a high degree within a recognised sales structure, preferably AIDA or DIPADA. We are based in prestigious offices in St. Katherine's Dock in the heart of the City.

In the first instance send or fax your CV marked PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL to:

STEVE GREEN
City-Info (UK) plc, World Trade Centre,
International House,
1 St. Katherine's Way, London E1 9UN
Tel: 0171 680 0670 • Fax: 0171 481 9825

SENIOR LEGAL/COMMERCIAL MANAGER

required by recently formed Investment Holding Co. Must be qualified lawyer with min 5 years experience. Detailed knowledge of English Property Law and experience in commercial property investment including practical rent review knowledge needed. Experience in financing and structuring commercial acquisitions is essential as is intimate knowledge of South African tax, property, commercial law and private equity market. £24k package.

CV's to Operations Director, InvestEd Ltd, 81 Oxford Street, London W1R 1RB.

THE INDEPENDENT London Recruitment Fairs 1999

Banking and Accountancy Recruitment Fair

11.00 am - 7.00 pm Wednesday 14 April
Cabot Hall, Cabot Place West, Canary Wharf, London

Free Admission

No need to pre-register

Find the top jobs

Meet the leading Banks and Accountancy companies

Free CV distribution

Bring your CV in a word document on disk and we will distribute it to all the exhibitors free of charge.

Only 10 minutes from Bank

From Cabot Hall it is only 10 minutes on the DLR from Bank

For further information about this exciting opportunity
Call Tom Nelson on 0171 323 4469 or 0171 323 4564

The Independent Recruitment Fairs are sponsored by

THE INDEPENDENT

and organised by  Independent Newspapers Exhibitions
7-9 Rathbone Street, London W1P 1AF

24/11/99

STRATFORD
NEW STRATFORD PICTURE HOUSE (0181-555 3366) BR/B Stratford Avenue, 3.55pm, 6.25pm, 8.55pm A Bug's Life 1.30pm Patch Adams 3.15pm, 8.20pm The Thin Red Line 1.15pm, 4.35pm, 8pm Walking Ned 2.15pm, 4.25pm, 6.45pm, 9.10pm

STREATHAM
ABC (0870-8020415) BR/Screaming Hill A Night at the Roxbury 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.35pm Patch Adams 2.15pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm Shakespeare in Love 2.25pm, 5.35pm, 8.25pm

ODEON (087050-050007) BR/Screaming Hill/B Britton A Bug's Life 12.10pm, 2.10pm, 4.10pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm, 10.45pm, 12.40pm, 2.40pm, 4.45pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm How Stella Got Her Groove Back 6.05pm, 8.35pm Pleasantville 3.10pm, 8.30pm The Thin Red Line 2.40pm, 4.10pm, 7.45pm, 9.45pm Walking Ned 4.40pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm You've Got Mail 12.40pm, 5.50pm

SURREY QUAYS
UCI (090-8888990) BR/Surrey Quays Arlington Road 1pm, 3.45pm, 6.20pm, 9.20pm, 11.45pm A Bug's Life 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm The Thin Red Line 2.0pm, 4.30pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm, 8.30pm, 11.30pm Patch Adams 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.50pm, 8.30pm, 11.50pm Pleasantville 12.15pm, 5.45pm, 8.40pm Shakespeare in Love 3.45pm, 6.40pm, 9.40pm The Thin Red Line 12.40pm, 4.15pm, 8.10pm This Year's Love 8.30pm, 11.30pm Urban Legend 8.30pm, 9.30pm Walking Ned 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 4.15pm, 7.10pm, 9.40pm 12midnight You've Got Mail 1pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm, 11.30pm

SUTTON
UCI (0980-888990) BR/Sutton & Moore The Actor House 6.15pm, 8.30pm Arlington Road 1pm, 4.15pm, 7.30pm, 8.45pm Patch Adams 12.15pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.15pm Shakespeare in Love 12.45pm, 3.45pm, 6.45pm, 9.30pm The Thin Red Line 1pm, 4.30pm, 6pm, 8pm Walking Ned 12.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm You've Got Mail 1pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm, 11.30pm

SWISS COTTAGE
WARNER VILLAGE (0181-446 9344) BR/East Finchley/Finchley Central Arlington Road 12.40pm, 3.40pm, 6.20pm, 9.10pm A Bug's Life 1.10pm, 3.30pm Patch Adams 1.40pm, 4.20pm, 7pm, 9.45pm Pleasantville 1.20pm, 4pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm Shakespeare in Love 1.30pm, 4.10pm, 6.35pm, 9.40pm The Thin Red Line 1.05pm, 4.50pm, 6.30pm Urban Legend 4.40pm, 6.30pm, 8.50pm Walking Ned 1.10pm, 3.20pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm You've Got Mail 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.40pm, 8.20pm

TURPIN LANE
CORONET (0181-888 2519) BR/Turpin Lane Patch Adams 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm This Year's Love 4.05pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm, 10pm Urban Legend 3.45pm, 6pm, 8.40pm Walking Ned 1pm, 4.30pm, 6.30pm, 8.30pm

UXBRIDGE
ODEON (08705 050007) BR/Underbridge Arlington Road 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm A Bug's Life 1.10pm, 3.15pm Patch Adams 5.30pm, 8.35pm

WALTHAMSTOW
ABC (0870-9020424) BR/Walthamstow Central The Mighty 8.25pm A Night at the Roxbury 1.25pm, 3.55pm, 6.05pm, 8.40pm Patch Adams 2.15pm, 5.15pm Shakespeare in Love 2.10pm, 5.15pm, 8.10pm

WALTON
CORONET (0181-888 2519) BR/Turpin Lane Patch Adams 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm Walking Ned 4.45pm, 6.50pm, 8pm

WELL HALL
CORONET (0181-850 3351) BR/Etham Pleasantville 5.35pm, 8.20pm The Thin Red Line 3.30pm, 7.35pm

WILLESDEN
BELLE-VUE (0181-989 0822) BR/Willesden Green Madeline 4.45pm Shakespeare in Love 6.30pm, 8pm

WIMBLEDON
ODEON (08705-050007) BR/E-Wimbledon/6 South Wimbledon Antz 11am A Bug's Life 1.10pm Elizabeth 11am Lock, Stock and Two Smokes 11am British 2.45pm, 5pm, 8.30pm Pleasantville 3.30pm, 8.25pm Shakespeare in Love 2.55pm, 5.45pm, 8.25pm The Thin Red Line 12.50pm, 4.10pm, 7.40pm The Truman Show 11am Walking Ned 2.30pm, 4.35pm, 6.45pm, 8.55pm Walking Ned 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 8pm You've Got Mail (PG)

WIPSWICH
ODEON (08705-050007) Antz (PG), A Bug's Life (U), Jack Frost (PG), Patch Adams (12), Pleasantville (12); The Rugrats Movie (U); Saving Private Ryan (15); The Thin Red Line (15); This Year's Love (18); Walking Ned (PG)

WALTON
THE SCREEN (01932-252825) BR/Walton-on-Thames Elizabeth 2.15pm La Vita è Bella 3.25pm, 8pm, 8.30pm Walking Ned 4.45pm, 6.50pm, 8pm

WILLESDEN
CORONET (0181-888 2519) BR/Walton-on-Thames Elizabeth 2.15pm La Vita è Bella 3.25pm, 8pm, 8.30pm Walking Ned 4.45pm, 6.50pm, 8pm

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CORONET (0181-850 3351) BR/Walton-on-Thames Elizabeth 2.15pm La Vita è Bella 3.25pm, 8pm, 8.30pm Walking Ned 4.45pm, 6.50pm, 8pm

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